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HIGHWAY ACROSS THE WEST INDIES

by

HERBERT C. LANKS



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New York & London
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TO
V. THEODORE SCHREIBER
WHO FIRST TAUGHT ME THE GRATIFICATIONS
OF TROPICAL VAGABONDAGE

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Introduction

This is the story of our trip across the islands of the West Indies, shipping from island to island in whatever kind of boat we could find, getting acquainted with lands and peoples by covering the highways of each country with our own car.

On former trips we had driven a car over the route of the Pan American Highway as far as the Panama Canal, covered most of South America on wheels to the Straits of Magellan, and had pushed and shoved an army jeep to the far end of the Alaska Highway. The Caribbean was all we had left, to round out the lands of the New World.

Glamorous and adventurous as was some of the rest of our automobile pioneering into the remote corners of two hemispheres, this island-hopping along the trail of the first Spanish explorers, through the haunts of long-gone pirates and buccaneers from the tip of Florida to the easternmost tip of the Spanish Main, was in some respects the cream of all our trips. Changes in lands and peoples that were occasionally more marked on the continent had crept upon us so gradually by car that often they went unnoticed. Crossing frontiers by water gave each island a refreshing impact on the senses.

At the same time, probably nowhere in the world does a similar area offer more variety in geography, physical and human, racial and social. Spain, England, France, Holland, Denmark, the empire-builders of three exciting centuries, struggled for a foothold in these tropic isles. Centuries later even the United States entered this languorous, island-girt arena. Blood of every nation and every breed of humankind, blood of pirates and buccaneers, blood of convicts and remittance men, blood

of adventurers and farm hands, drenched the thin soil of every islet or was mixed in the *mélange* of mankind that populates this crowded world. As a result, in the narrow periphery of the Caribbean there stand facing each other Spanish Cuba, English Jamaica, French Haiti, Americanized Puerto Rico, Trinidad with Englishmen and East Indians lifted bodily from England's empire-building past. There is contrast too in the legends of an Indian past that has been swept wholly into oblivion, in vast and crumbling ruins that whisper of a day when this now quiet backwater of the world was powerful and rich, in the neon-lit glare and raucous clatter of night clubs. There is a wealth of allure in the pristine beauty of dazzling white beaches washed by waters green as the jungle or blue as tropic skies, in forest-clad mountains, in the jungle's somber depths, in the rustling ranks of the palms. It is all yours for the time-taking, and you can drive your own car to it all!

When we first mentioned to friends the idea of covering the Caribbean with our own car, we were made to feel as Columbus must have felt. Even though a freshly-finished war had accustomed everyone to the possibilities of amphibious operations, we were beset with solemn warnings on every side. What would we do for roads in the wild West Indies? What would we do for dependable transportation from island to island? What would we do for decent accommodations if Gladys went along?

Then we turned for answers to where the answers were. We learned that oil companies issue road maps for Puerto Rico and Cuba as excellent as anything to be found in the United States. We learned that Puerto Rico had more good roads per square mile than continental United States, and that Cuba was riddled with roads. From governments of the various islands we secured other maps and statistics. Those folks had all heard of automobiles too!

We learned too that during the war just past, when German submarines threatened to cut the shipping lanes to our Puerto Rican outposts, the United States Army had experimented with trucking supplies across the islands and shipping by local native craft across the short water gaps that separate the islands. Our trucks had rolled across Cuba,

Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. Why couldn't we? We found too that there were a considerable number of small craft plying between the islands. If we took a little car no bigger than three or four bunches of bananas . . . Of course there would be occasional delays, but who cared? We could plan a leisurely trip. As it turned out, in five months we spent but a small percentage of time in waiting at the pier.

But it's a long trip, 12,000 miles of land and water, so let's back off for a running start. . . .

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CHAPTER I

Havana, Potpourri of Past and Present

Future automobilists will probably accompany their cars on the ferry from Key West to Havana. This service, halted by the war, should be resumed any day now in highly expanded form. But, leaving from Miami, it was much more comfortable for us to go by air, shipping our car ahead on a small freighter. Air travel to Cuba is still a thrill, but it has grown as commonplace as a streetcar ride. Nearly seven thousand Americans make this flight every week, and planes leave practically every hour.

The first part of the air trip followed the Overseas Highway down to Key West, giving us an opportunity to examine this spectacular road from the air. With clear weather all the way down, and flying at a moderate altitude, we were able to get some excellent photographs and motion pictures of it.

It is difficult to say whether the Overseas Highway is more impressive from the air or by automobile. From the air, its foothold on land seems most precarious. Traveling over it only a few days before, it had seemed solid, massive. From six thousand feet up, with the keys strung along it, it was more like a strand of spider web before the dew is gone. Key West, which had looked so substantial as we walked along its streets days before, now appeared held in place by a mere thread which might break at any minute and allow the toy town to drift away.

Now we were out over the deep blue of the Florida Strait, separating Cuba from the mainland, through which pours the Gulf Stream with its powerful influence on the climate of two continents. Columbus reported this on his first voyage as a *mightie streame in the ocean*. Below

us, ships left a long wake of white water as they plowed upstream into the Caribbean.

By the time our tasty lunch of coffee and sandwiches had been served to us by the air hostess, land began to show up on our left and soon we were over Cuba. A coastal town or two flitted by beneath, and now we were over the great city of Havana, miles of flat-roofed buildings and canyon-like streets. We dropped out of the sunshine and were told it was raining at the airport, and soon we heard the big drops beating on the metal wings and fuselage of the plane. We were met with umbrellas as we stepped down to make our way into the terminal.

While awaiting our turn to go through the customs with the other passengers, an attendant dressed in resplendent steward's uniform marched up with a tray of icy cocktails with the compliments of Bacardi, the famous manufacturers of Cuban rum. As it was still raining outside I stepped to the open door and, holding my finger out as if to taste the rain, jocularly demanded to know "*Llueve Bacardi aquí?*" (Does it rain Bacardi here?). With this we were rushed through customs with hardly a glance at our baggage, for Cubans like a joke as much as anyone.

Although not our first visit to Havana, the ride along the wide Malecón Drive with the ocean on one side and Havana's skyline on the other thrilled us anew. It is like a drive over Chicago's Michigan Boulevard, or New York's Riverside Drive. Gladys remarked that the architecture along Malecón Drive looked much like her idea of the way the city parts of ancient Greece must have looked. Then up the tree-arched Prado to the capitol square we turned, a city entrance second to none in the world for impressiveness. Here, right off Fraternity Square, we chose one of the score of little hotels not usually patronized by Americans. In strictly Cuban atmosphere we settled down to learn as much as possible of these vivacious Cubans and their charming capital city, Havana.

Our hotel on Gómez Street was of Spanish architecture, with grilled windows, iron-railed balconies outside and around the interior patios, tiled floors, painted walls. Each floor had rooms opening around two

patios, the main patio open all the way to the sky with more balconies on each floor. Marble-topped stairways led up to each floor of the interior patio, and a modern elevator had been installed on the end of the outside patio. With the introduction of private baths for most of the rooms, there was modern comfort amidst old Spanish surroundings. While in your room you shut off the view from the public patio by means of ornately decorated doors open at the top to admit light and air, swinging aside the heavier doors by which the room was locked.

On the ground floor was the hotel restaurant, run under Chinese management like many of the Cuban restaurants. At these places you can be assured of good food at reasonable prices. Gladys and I always looked forward to the fun of experimenting with the variety of dishes they had to offer on the extensive menu. One could hardly go wrong, because they were all so well prepared and excellently flavored. It was entirely à la carte, so you could choose a combination of dishes for a meal in infinite variety. There were always three or four soups available, and probably a score of meat entrées. The latter included practically every kind of meat and fowl, at least a half-dozen sea food dishes, eggs, steaks and chops to order in many styles, a half-dozen or more vegetable side dishes, and at least a dozen different desserts. And finally, a list of practically every beverage known to man. With such an array of dishes, a complete meal for each of us sometimes ran over fifty cents!

We found the same irresistible variety of dishes in restaurants, fondas and clubs everywhere we ate in Havana. It is certainly a place of thrilling adventure to epicures and hungry people. One of the popular Cuban dishes is *arroz con pollo*, chicken with rice, nicely seasoned and temptingly colored with saffron and red pepper. Another is *ajiaco*, a sort of stew with all kinds of vegetables. There is also the *caldo gallego*, a stew made with *garbanzo* beans, potatoes, and cabbage, wonderfully flavored with well-cooked meat and onions. None of these is too strange for the homesick palate, and everywhere one can buy a *bifstek*, which is more similar to the good old American favorite than is the name as spelled in Spanish. The Cuban version of roast beef, *carne asada*, will be found to be more flavored than the American, but very tasty. Eggs

in infinite variety are recognizable in any language, and you must try the famous Cuban *tortilla* or omelette, which makes a meal in itself. These come in endless combinations, with ham and peas, or shrimp, or even potatoes. Fried or roasted fowl, particularly chicken or turkey, are common dishes.

Naturally, Havana, like all Cuban ports, is famous for its sea food. Here lobster is a dish of the middle class and not of the well-to-do epicure as in the United States. There are the famous and delectable Moorish crabs, shrimp, and many kinds of local fish.

For desserts the preserved native fruits, in which sugar is naturally not spared, are most excellent. Preserves of *guayaba* with cheese or grated coconut in preserves make equally tempting desserts. And there are all kinds of elaborately decorated French pastries, as well as the local fresh fruits—melon, banana, papaya, watermelon, and mango. Every meal ends with the tiny demi-tasse of coffee, heavily sweetened and sipped like nectar.

Although these Havanese eat and drink heartily for both the noonday and evening meal, generally later than the American hours, they eat a very sparing breakfast. The regular restaurants do not open much before noon, and one takes morning coffee in a little sidewalk café. Here you generally have *café con leche*, a mixture of hot milk flavored with coffee, well sweetened with many spoonfuls of sugar and a touch of salt. It is quite the custom to dunk the deliciously crusty bread, which comes in pieces cut from loaves a yard long. There is also a sort of cup cake called *panque*, which is very different from the Yankee pancakes from which the name was derived. In these sidewalk cafés you can also get hot chocolate and freshly made fruit juices, generally sweetened with powdered sugar and beaten into a frothy drink. If you want the old American stand-by, ham and eggs and coffee as you are used to it, you must seek out one of the places that caters to American trade only.

American style ice cream is now an accepted Havana delicacy, being served by many of the little cafés, and you can get real American sodas, sundaes, and milk shakes too. As for stronger drinks, in some sections of Havana bars and cabarets virtually overlap. One gets the impression that

a good bit of Havana business is devoted to the quenching of thirst. This is mainly because bars are particularly common in the section frequented by tourists. If the Cubans themselves drink much, there is little evidence of it; there is very little drunkenness seen. Mixed drinks may be the favorite of the foreigner, but beer is the Cuban drink—outside of the ubiquitous rum, of course.

Once we were settled comfortably in our hotel quarters, it became our object to make as quick and thorough a tour of the city as possible, in order to get on with the study of the republic as a whole. With our own car in our possession again, and with Sr. Fernando Fernandez, an authority on Havana and author of a guide book on the republic, we were ready to set out. With the help of the Cuban Tourist Commission to open all doors to us, we were able to speed up our study of Havana and its people, and to get about anywhere we wished to go.

It all started off with a bang as we arrived there just a few days before election. As in most countries of Latin America, elections are held on Sunday—in this case on the last Sunday in June. All through the city during the last days of the week polling places were being set up in private homes and business houses on practically every street. The arrangement was similar to voting in smaller communities in the United States. Private canvas booths were provided, with election officials on hand to check off voters from the voting lists.

Election day in Cuba is a Roman holiday. Every place of employment, except eating places and hotels, is closed. No intoxicating drinks are sold until the polls close at six o'clock, but everyone is dressed up in Sunday best and there is an air of great excitement everywhere. Groups gather in cafés and private homes, as well as in the streets. Practically all taxis, as well as many private cars bearing huge political placards, are engaged by the politicians in carrying voters and party officials to and from the various polling places.

At the polling places long lines gather, the women on one side and the men on the other, with military guards on duty to admit people to the polling booths, and to see that strict order is kept. There is every evidence that Cubans take their voting seriously. Now and then a voter

appears whose name is not on the voting list, and he is likely to argue vociferously against the injustice of being deprived of the vote. Even youngsters gather in groups, arguing politics. They show much greater interest in politics than children in the United States, probably because of the example set by their elders. The fact that they are closer to the franchise may have a further bearing on this; Cubans vote at nineteen. The high schools and the University of Havana are hotbeds of political ferment during political campaigns. Campaigns on the whole are much more exciting than in the United States. Offices are more eagerly sought, candidates often expending far more in the campaign than they could possibly earn as salary during their entire period of office, even if elected. Huge electric and neon signs rivaling the commercial advertisements are erected on the tallest buildings in Havana. Newspapers, periodicals, and the radio boil with political excitement. Innumerable leaflets, pamphlets, and broadsides flavor the political stew. The noisy streets of Havana are noisier still with loudspeakers and radio trucks hired by the *políticos* to add to the din with stirring music and blaring buncombe. Now and then an exchange of fisticuffs takes place. Crowds gather to watch the participants, urging them on with impartiality. Sometimes these fights grow and become general, and have on occasion ended in bloodshed and shooting. On election day itself, however, the government takes ample precautions, with plenty of special military guards to maintain peace and order. We did witness several scraps between street urchins which sprang more from an urge to take part in the general excitement than from any real cause to quarrel. Crowds gathered quickly for these effervescent frays, but obligingly let me through when they understood that I wanted to secure pictures of these fights. However, when someone yelled *policía*, the crowds and combatants disappeared as if by magic. Cubans have come a long way in a short time on the road to democracy. They love their elections and get the utmost out of them, but they have also learned to respect laws made by democratic processes.

Perhaps the reason the naturally irrepressible Cubans accept the majesty of the law is because of the grandeur of its accoutrements, especially

in Havana. The capitol building dominates the city as Havana herself dominates the republic. Here is an edifice in which every Cuban can take just pride, not only for its impressive size but for its beauty and good taste as well. The enormous white limestone structure with its gleaming white dome gives a very real impression of stateliness and richness. The broad steps leading up to it are of white Vermont marble, and the rooms and halls are paneled in fifty-three varieties of marble, and ornamented with Burgundy-red Cuban mahogany and rich gold leaf. The ceilings are done in Italian Renaissance style, with Bohemian stained glass and magnificent chandeliers imported from France. The main reception hall alone is an impressive room four hundred feet long. Beneath the vast dome of the building stands an enormous female warrior statue of bronze overlaid with gold leaf, representing the republic of Cuba. It stands fifty-eight feet high, weighs nearly fifty tons, and is the second largest interior statue in the world. The whole great edifice cost over eighteen million dollars, which makes it the costliest capitol building in the world, in proportion to the population of the country. Free Cuba in this respect at least attempts to "keep up front" in a style befitting medieval Spain.

The other government buildings of Havana cover an age range of nearly four hundred years. Many of them, while serving the workaday needs of the present, are priceless museums of the art and architecture of the past. Take Santa Clara Convent, as a fine example. Its huge balconied patio with its stately colonnades dates back to the early seventeenth century, to a day when architecture was more profligate. Within this patio are preserved intact the first houses built in Havana by the Spaniards nearly a century earlier. But the great old building itself serves the Ministry of Public Works as office space.

Down near the waterfront an old Franciscan monastery has been converted into today's general post office, by the simple process of placing postal clerks instead of monks in the arched stone cells. Everywhere in Havana, in fact, palaces that once belonged to Spanish noblemen have become business houses, old people's homes, benevolent societies, even boardinghouses. Yet some of the new buildings, like the

recently completed Ministry of Agriculture, are beautifully modern in design.

Aside from the ancient fortresses, perhaps the best place in which to bask in the emanations of Spanish history in stone is in Cathedral Square. You breathe history in the very air of this cobblestoned square, as you amble through the porticoes that run around three sides. On the other side is the great Columbus Cathedral, where the bones of Columbus were to have been interred. One building on this square is referred to as the home of the half-legendary De Soto.

Not far away is the Plaza de Armas, the great square which was the very center of political, social, and religious life. Overlooking it is a large stone building with colonnaded front and balconied patio, which is the best remaining example of Spanish colonial architecture. It is used today as the City Hall. It was originally the seat of Spanish government, and successively the seat of United States administration following the Spanish-American War, and then the modern republic's presidential palace until completion of the present grand edifice in 1920. Across the plaza from here is the Temple, a shrine in the form of a miniature chapel, marking the site of the first Mass held by the Spanish founders.

It was really the mossy antiquity of the Plaza de Armas that first turned our attention from the modern and the human Cuba to the Cuba that was handed down from a breath-taking past. Coming in as we did by air, Cuba at first seemed like a large green map. You, however, will most likely, if touring-bent, ride over on the same ferry that takes your car, and anyone approaching by water is bound to be chiefly impressed by the venerable aspect of Cuba. Not only do the old stone buildings that were the original Havana invest the city with a medieval touch; the massive pillar of El Morro Castle looming over the harbor entrance is as much the identifying mark of Havana as is the Eiffel Tower for Paris or the Statue of Liberty for New York. Its gray stone walls and ramparts are visible from many points in the modern city, a constant reminder of the days of imperial Spain.

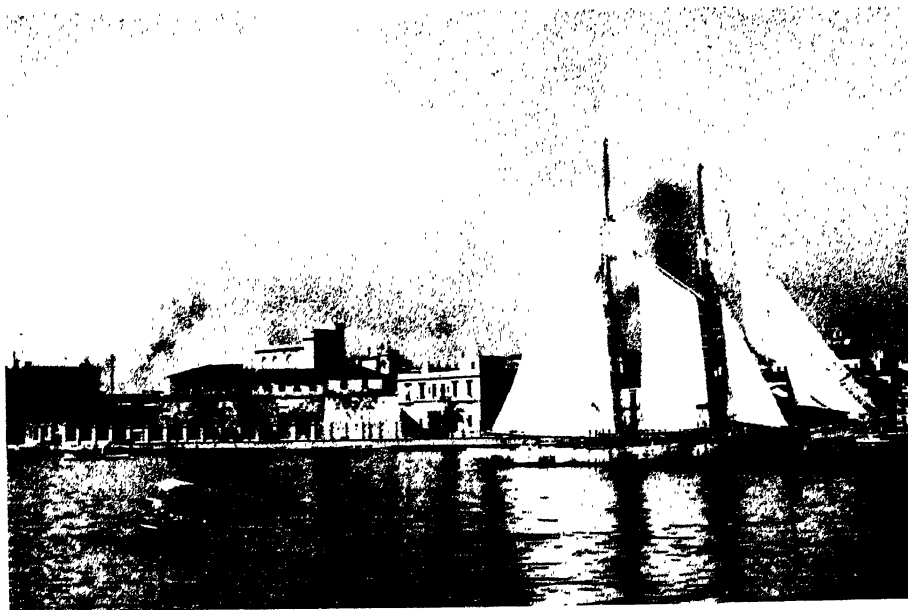
With this gloomy pile looming up in the distance no matter where



Ancient Spanish cannon frown down on Havana harbor from La Cabaña fortress

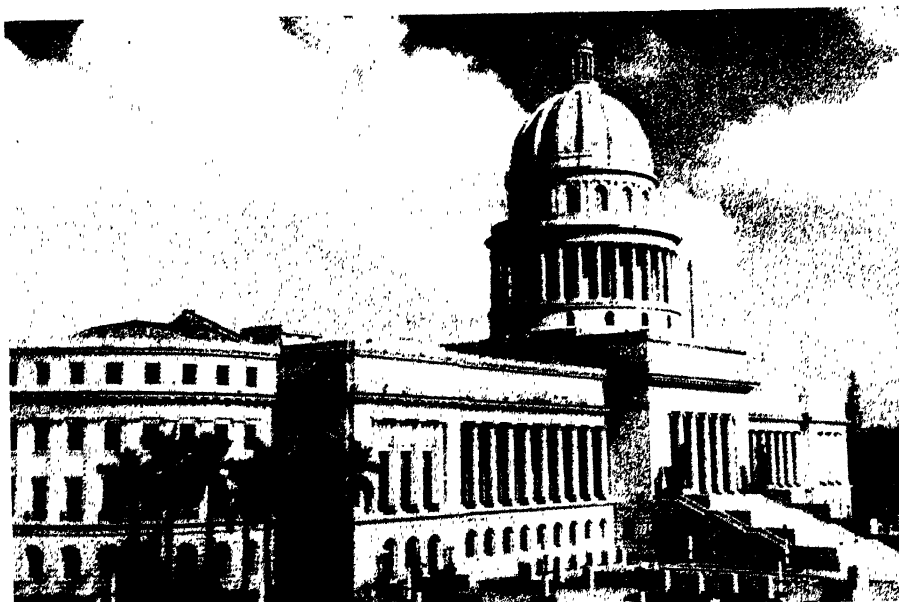


Lobsters—cheap and plentiful—tempt the epicure's appetite



All kinds of craft pass through the harbor entrance of Havana

Havana's imposing capitol





Under the capitol dome is the proud "Republic of Cuba"

we went in the city, it was only natural that we should go and look it over. Numerous rowboats for hire carry passengers across the narrow channel to Morro Castle at the rate of five cents for Cubans and twenty-five cents for tourists. Though El Morro's mass of battlements and ramparts do not lend themselves readily to the needs of a modern fort, we were surprised to find that quarters for some Cuban marines are maintained here.

The name *El Morro* is only the Spanish word for headland, so there are many El Morros at Spanish harbor entrances. But the one at Havana is undoubtedly outstanding, and truly imposing when seen at close hand. The approach from the boat landing is up an inclined causeway, along which rusty, half-buried Spanish cannons protrude from the ground. The causeway leads beneath forbidding battlements studded with additional rows of rusting cannon, and across arched gateways through walls so thick that they contain guardrooms buried within the very walls.

From the heights of the old Spanish walls towering high above the harbor entrance we had a magnificent view of the city of Havana spread out below. The dome of the great capitol, eighteen million dollars worth of ostentation, dominated the view and challenged El Morro itself. The vast marble statue to Maximo Gómez, center of a minor spider web of city streets, glistened in the sun. The statue to Macéo and a monument to the memory of the *Maine* were minor points of light in a shiny, gay, light-hearted city. A thin, glittering line cutting toward the heart of town marked the Avenue of the Presidents. We recalled it when we had come into Havana the first time—that spacious street of gleaming marble likenesses, each softly “antiqued” with pigeon droppings. Everything sparkled in the city below—everything but the Cathedral Square, and the Plaza de Armas. Everything but over this way, toward El Morro, across the vast piles of fortress and rampart and bulwark that had once protected this Pearl of the Antilles from a more ruthless invader than the American tourist. Over these there seemed to be a light cloud—there seemed to be a gloom and dimness, as when you see through a glass but darkly—there seemed to be a haze, though it

was a crystal-clear day. Maybe it was the patina of time-worn stone, or only the mist of a fabulous past. Anyway, it was downtown in modern Havana, and it was in the same soft and hazy and imponderable tone as was venerable El Morro itself. It told us that there was and is a Havana concerned with more than tourists' pleasures, more than glitter, more than this afternoon's cocktail hour. Havana was built a long time ago, far back in the days when men were demi-gods—and it is still there. It was there below us, where the shadow of El Morro was deepest, and it was perhaps our visit to this mossy outpost that drew our negligent minds back to an awareness of its antiquity.

As a matter of fact, El Morro itself was by way of being a bit of an afterthought. At the first, the bumbling pile of the stone wall that had surrounded the original city had been depended upon as a bulwark against piracy. But an open place had been left in this wall, possibly so that Spaniards could get in. Soon bands of pirates were landing at the harbor entrance, marching overland to besiege the city, sacking it thoroughly and then handing it back. It was in refutation or defense against this foul technique that the doughty grandees of old Havana reared a formidable fortress at one point of the harbor entrance, called Point Castle. Over here on the other tip of the pincers (headland, to you land-lubbers) they reared the lofty might of El Morro. Between these two stone bulwarks, they stretched a chain across the harbor entrance. This seemed to help.

It helped until 1762, when the British and American colonials, for some reason that has grown obscure with the passing centuries, decided to make a test case of El Morro. Capturing the high ground on the landward side, the British succeeded in mining and breaching the walls. After months of siege, El Morro fell. The Spaniards, in panic, attempted to stem the crimson tide by sinking a few of their own ships in the harbor entrance. After the British took El Morro this stratagem proved highly helpful to the invaders. It kept the Spanish ships in the harbor while the British took sitting shots at them with El Morro's guns. After two weeks of hopeless struggle, the city surrendered; but a year later it was handed back to the Spaniards on the grounds that the Spaniards had disqualified

the whole contest by a foul against themselves. The game was never re-played.

The disaster, and the embarrassment of receiving Havana back from the British on such grounds, served to spur the Spaniards to new efforts. Having learned the hard way the importance of the high ground behind El Morro, they proceeded to build the mighty fortress of La Cabana along the ridge. It was built at such a tremendous cost in treasure that the king expressed surprise that he couldn't see it from Seville.

Today La Cabana serves as costly but very habitable quarters for an army unit. Although it is not open to the general public, we were invited to visit it under the escort of an army lieutenant. We were amazed at the size of the fortifications, as well as by the army's ingenuity in setting up modernized and highly habitable quarters there. Very acceptable quarters, as well as mess halls and recreation rooms, had been established in the labyrinthine tunnels and dungeons carved from living rock. From the old ramparts a cannon is still fired each night at nine o'clock, a custom of the old days of curfew that serves today only as a signal for the citizenry to set their watches and begin their parties.

The most sacred spot amidst the ramparts and moats of this old fortification is called Laurel Ditch. It is a tremendous moat facing the wall, on one side of which captured Cuban patriots in rebellions against Spain were forced to kneel with their backs to the firing squad. Countless bullet holes in the wall are mute testimony of the number executed. Laurel trees which grow in the earth at the end of the long moat give the place its name. An iron railing enclosing a little garden and marked by a bronze plaque preserves the spot as something of a national shrine.

It is the mass and might of El Morro that turns the attention of every visitor away from the scintillant, cosmopolite city of today to the Havana that is rooted in the past and in the very island's living rock. We were wine and dined and most lavishly entertained—but it is the Havana of our last night in the city that thrills us most.

It was almost dusk and we were crossing the vast Plaza de Armas. Gladys, too, found this place enchanting, and much more comfortable to browse through in high-heeled shoes than the rough and ancient cob-

blestones of old Cathedral Square. We had left the tremendous and historic pile of the City Hall, and tomorrow we would leave Havana. "Let's go back in *that* building," she said, "for just a minute. Because it gives me goose pimples from something." She pointed over to La Fuerza Castle, settling down into night and into the ages as the hurried tropic twilight pushed out from the dark corners to snatch the city from a rosy sunset.

We had been all over this ground before, but there is something about this side of Havana that bears a lot of redoing. The square, even as it bustled with office workers hurrying home from the City Hall, is a place of ghosts. Here Hernán Cortez as a lusty young hellion gave headaches to Governor Diego Velásquez, and from here he had sneaked away to the conquest of Mexico. We entered the cold stone pile of La Fuerza, and shivered to the thrilling thought that the very corridor that echoed the tap of Gladys' high heels had once rung to the heavy footfalls of Ponce de León, perhaps hurrying before he was trapped by time and the ages and the dark—hurrying away to an ever-fabulous Florida. The very castle itself had been built on the order of Hernando de Soto while he was governor of this rich steppingstone of an island, before he too had hurried on to larger fields and great adventure and death.

Darkness was creeping out of every doorway and cat-footing down the corridor now, but this was the last night and I had made myself *simpático* with the guard, and even though it was after hours he let us both into the tower, the high tower from which the restless De Soto had watched an equally restless sea. We sped up the spiral stairway, hastening to escape the clutching dark. We came out upon the last shred of daylight at the top, and gazed out on Havana twinkling into life for a gay evening. We looked out, too, across the gently heaving sea. Then we turned to leave, but we were afraid to go down again through the dark—afraid of ghosts. Somewhere below might be the wife of Hernando de Soto, climbing again to keep her endless vigil as she had kept it in life. Through the long years on the very spot where we stood she had scanned the seas for a sign of his return, a lonely woman waiting for her man. Through all the weary years she had waited for the heroic

figure who had found an obscure resting place on the bosom of the distant Mississippi, "alwayes muddie," in the heart of an unborn nation that centuries later would wrest this warm pearl of an island from a crumbling Spain. I struck a light with a pocket lighter, and we felt our way down through the ghosts of demi-gods and the dark.

CHAPTER II

Clubs and Cockfights

Cubans are the clubbiest people! And Havana is their capital.

"What's that lovely building?" Gladys asked Sr. Fernandez on our first day, pointing to an impressive stone edifice on the Prado.

"That? Oh, it is just a clubhouse. For the Clerks' Club."

"The *Clerks'* Club?"

"That is right, señora. It is one of the oldest social benefit clubs in Havana."

"Do they have a Bankers' Club here, too? Because if they do, I'd like to see it. I bet *it* would be nice!"

When we were told that two of the most impressive of the new buildings in central Havana, facing each other on the central park, were the Galician Center and the Asturian Center, and that they housed two of the most important regional clubs, we were definitely impressed. We were more impressed when we were invited on a tour of these fine buildings with their ornate marble interiors, and when we learned that the National Theater itself is but an adjunct of the Galician Center. It began to look as if in Havana clubs were trumps.

Nothing we learned later did much to erase this first impression. There are social clubs, yacht clubs, music clubs, culture clubs, country clubs. There are many regional clubs, such as the Galician Center, founded originally by people from Galicia or their descendants. Today the membership requirements are somewhat relaxed, demanding merely that you know or have heard of someone from Galicia or a descendant of someone from Galicia, or that you know a member or the descendant of a

member of the club, or that you want to join the club and can afford two dollars a month!

In case these requirements for membership seem overly strict, or in case none of Havana's multitudinous clubs catches your fancy, be not dismayed. You may gather with a few people who share your own likes and interests and found a new club. Others do it. New clubs spring up every day. Or if you are opposed to the principle of clubs, you may start a Club-haters' Club.

We were invited to visit the Galician Center, or *Centro Gallego*, shortly after our arrival. Typical of the larger clubs, it is worth a few words. It had grown from a simple little benefit society to foster neighborliness and mutual aid among Galicians. It had grown well. Today it is an organization with so many ramifications that few of its members can take part in all the activities. For dues of two dollars a month members receive various social insurances and medical care, to which many subscribe without taking part in the club's social life.

On the second floor of the clubhouse one room, extending the full length of a city block, is given over to various pastimes—cards, billiards, pool, dominoes, chess, and anything else you might name. Several hundred people were scattered about this amusement floor the night we were there, all intent on some one of these games. On the floor above, the same immense area had been converted into an ornate ballroom. Full-length balconied windows on all sides reminded us of the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

That evening we attended the National Theater, in the same building. The theater interior, with its circles of towering balconies, had much the appearance of one of the city opera houses in the United States. The show was put on by a stock company from Madrid, just returning from a tour of South America. We were amazed at the low prices, ranging from twenty-five cents in the upper balconies to only a dollar in the orchestra seats, for what proved to be fair entertainment. The sets were artistically planned and the performers of professional caliber. The star was a famous singer named Conchita Piquer, and she and the accompanying artists were well received by the audience. The costumes were

as competently designed as the scenery, and the show itself consisted of a series of dances, songs, and choruses featuring Spanish regional motifs.

We were fortunate, too, to be invited to attend one of the social events of the season—a formal dance and buffet supper at the Havana Yacht Club, one of the oldest and most exclusive organizations of the city. This club is distinctive in that its membership is almost entirely Cuban, in contrast to several other exclusive clubs which also take in Americans. We were surprised to see the degree of formal dress worn by both men and women in this warm climate. As it was summer, the men were all dressed in immaculate white, although a few appeared in light suits. The women wore stunning knee-length formal gowns and immense picture hats, each an individual creation for the wearer. The atmosphere of the affair was much more formal than a similar function in the United States. We noticed that most of the young girls were closely watched over by an elder—a custom still surviving from the dueña system. Although everybody seemed well acquainted, there was not the cutting-in on dances that would be seen at a similar affair back home. The same partners stayed with each other for the evening. Tables along the sides were patronized by the more elderly, who watched the activities of the younger set while they chatted with their friends.

At the Havana-Biltmore Yacht and Country Club we attended a sailboat regatta in which various other clubs participated. It was an exciting affair, consisting of several classes of sailboats, ranging from sleek, streamlined boats of narrow keel to the slower flat-bottomed sailboats manipulated by youngsters, each kept in its own class, of course. It made quite a thrilling picture as acres of white sails dotted the blue sea. Now and then a contestant got into distress and had to be towed back to the shore by one of the motor patrol boats. There was some skillful maneuvering, especially when the various entries lined up for the take-off. This was done by timing each one as it passed the starting boat of the course. Hours—all of them exciting—were spent in running a circle course laid out by anchored buoys.



An exclusive club, the cigar-makers of Havana are entertained at work

Kawama Club at fashionable Varadero Beach caters to exclusive clientele





Luscious pineapples are sold for a few cents on the streets of Sancti Spiritus

Marlin fishing, when the marlin are running, is also an important sport along the coast, and we were fortunate to be there during a run. Fishermen get as many as twenty strikes a trip off the coast near Havana. We saw some of these monstrous fish brought in. They are caught weighing up to four or five hundred pounds. Incidentally, marlin fishing is one of the most vigorous of sports, and only those hardened to it can fight a marlin all the way.

But to get back to land again in review of Cuban club life: The Havana Country Club showed us one of the most beautiful golf courses to be seen anywhere in the world, set off with rows of stately royal palms. The residential suburb around the same section is called Country Club Park, and has some of the finest houses in all suburban Havana. The main approach to it is along sea-walled Malecón Drive and Fifth Avenue, a park-like boulevard of flowers and exotic trees leading through a suburb named *Vedado*.

However, golf is not as popular with Cubans as with Americans. The tired Cuban businessman doesn't usually care to get more exhausted playing golf in this warm climate, though some of them do engage in even more strenuous sports, such as riding, hunting, and fishing. For the most part, though, the tired businessman in Cuba likes to take it easy with his friends at the club, over a scotch and soda and a good Havana cigar.

Practically all sports are popular among the younger set, and in the schools basketball is particularly important. The climate is too hot for heavy football uniforms but they do have some baseball. It has not achieved the wide popularity it enjoys in the United States, though there is considerable playing of the sand-lot variety around Havana, especially in the open plazas. It is quite a sight to see costly and artistic monuments serving as bleachers!

A sport which is especially patronized by tourists in Havana is *jai-alai*. It is said to be the fastest contest in the world. It is played on a court similar to a tennis court, but with high walls on three sides. These walls are used in the play. A heavy, hard rubber ball is thrown by means of basket-like devices strapped to the contestants' arms. Since it requires so

much skill and costly equipment it is seldom played by other than professionals.

Of almost as great interest to the spectators as the game itself is the betting. Attendants stationed among the audience help betters exchange bets during the course of the game. It becomes rather complicated in that a man may hedge former bets so that, although he puts up hundreds or even thousands, his winnings or his losses may be only a few dollars.

Not even the sketchiest treatment of Cuban sports would be complete without mention of cockfighting. It is perhaps *the* national pastime. Although it originated among the lower class, wealthy patrons have since taken it up and developed it into a fine art of breeding and training select cocks of fighting blood. These wealthy patrons invest considerable time and money, so that today the sport is highly organized and has all the appurtenances of horse racing in the United States or bull fighting in Mexico. Of course, it lacks as wide a following because it has remained essentially a man's sport.

We went to one of the places, called *vallas*, where cock fights are held. The one we visited, called *Valla Habana*, was in the city and was typical of the better places.

The building itself had a rather open frame with a conical roof for sheltering the circular fighting pit. Rising near the pit on all sides were steep ascending tiers of seats for spectators. Country *vallas*, which we saw later, were always cruder and usually had thatched roofs.

The pit of the *Valla Habana* consisted of a low wooden barricade on which the spectators in the front row lean as they eagerly watch the feathered warriors perform. The pit was circular, as they all are, and about twenty-five feet across. The floor of the pit, which is really the *valla* itself, was covered with wood shavings which were kept dampened. Connected with the *valla* were other sheltered rooms for various purposes. In one, gamecocks are kept while awaiting their turn, and in another trainers prepare the cocks for the ring, teasing them into fury. There is also a scale room, where gamecocks are carefully weighed in before the fight. And of course no building devoted to spectator sportsmen would be complete without lunchroom and bar:

The few cockfights we saw there had one point in common: they were longer than fights we had seen in Central America, and, in the case of evenly matched birds, their ends were painfully protracted. In Central America gamecocks as a rule wear steel spurs. Fights are bloody, flashy, and short; often a fight is terminated in the first slashing encounter of the birds. But, fighting with natural spurs as they do in Cuba, a fight between evenly matched birds may drag on and on after each bird is tired, and sometimes the bout ends in one bird being slowly pecked to death.

A curious thing about the use of natural spurs in Cuba is that seldom does a bird go into the ring with his own spurs because they are not, as a rule, perfect enough. In any event a close check is made on the length of a gamecock's spurs before each fight. So in most cases his spurs are clipped short early in youth, and when in the ring he will wear more perfect ones clipped from some dead or retired battler and conforming to the length requirements of the match. The technique of attaching these spurs with tape and wax is quite an art in itself. When this is done, the length of spur is measured by the trainer of the opposing fowl, and must conform to rigid requirements in length. Trainers generally have a considerable collection of these horny spurs, removed from old cocks and saved from fight to fight.

When spur length has been closely checked and the birds have been carefully weighed, they are ready for the ring. Each has already been teased into fighting fury, and when placed under the openwork basket on the floor of the ring he is able to peer out and make insulting noises and rude faces at his opponent, which serves to further stimulate both contestants. Then the basket is hoisted by a rope from overhead, and the fight is on.

As a rule, both birds rush in heatedly for the initial clash. The conflict at first is often so furious that it is difficult to distinguish the separate bundles of feathers. However, there are exceptions. Occasionally both birds will creep toward each other, tense and watchful, poised as if on tip-toe, balefully watching for an opening, stalking one another like a pair of mutually respectful boxers. With those long clipped necks out-

thrust—but Gladys pinned down the thought and symbol of those feathered furies better than I could. "Look!" she cried, "Those snakey necks! Those fierce, beady eyes!" as two seasoned warriors advanced cautiously. "Why, *there's* the Feathered Serpent the Aztecs had in their religion! Why, they both look like snakes creeping out as far as they can from a bunch of tail-feathers!"

There is a furious rhythm to the early part of a fight between well-matched opponents. Clashes, which begin low and sometimes rise to a height of four feet or so as the two opponents walk up one another's feathered breasts, are short and intensely fierce. Despite the madly beating wings, the return of the battlers to earth often gives an odd impression that they walk *down* each other's bodies too, and this with great reluctance. These clashes are followed by minutes of stiff-legged stalking, broken at times by tragi-comic relief as one or the other ferocious bit of feathers abruptly turns tail and "bicycles" away from his opponent at break-neck speed. Comic, because the idea of sudden cowardice on the part of such a bloodthirsty mite is grotesque; tragic, because it is often a ruse and always taken seriously. The pursuer, who may have used good ring judgment up to this point, often finds himself sailing head-on into an impenetrable maelstrom of beating wing, searing beak, and tearing spur with no time to reach his brakes.

But we neglect the spectators. No cockfight is complete without an audience. No moment of insensate fury in the pit is more intense than the boiling and boisterous enthusiasm of the crowd. No crescendo of combat there in the ring below is so heroic as the frenzied betting—an all-engulfing tide that begins staidly with the bets between owners or handlers and rises to envelop the whole audience of the *valla*; that begins with pin money and sweeps on to engulf the rent. Roosters aren't the only idiot brave. The drama of the betting rises and falls with the action in the *valla*, and the rise and fall of the screaming tumult is an operatic background to the action. But occasionally, in an evenly matched event, the birds tire and the match is reduced to a slow and unlovely contest between two brave but spent birds reduced to pecking one another to death. Here man rises above the lower beasts; the frenzy of the panting

audience soars above the fading fray, becomes contrapuntal to the ebbing action.

Anyone with the price of admission can attend a cockfight in Cuba. But, with the typical luck that has ever dogged my footsteps, I managed to get more out of it than just the fight. Inquiring around as to who were the tycoons in the business end of this sport, I was introduced to a Señor Federico Cardona. By the rarest of coincidences, Sr. Cardona had gone to school in the United States not far from my home town. This did much to turn a contact into a friendship. Gladys' and Señora Cardona's mutual professional interest in art did much to ripen this friendship in the rapid manner that typifies the ripening process in the tropics. What might have been merely a pleasant and informative talk ended in a delightful Sunday on the Cardona estate about forty miles out of Havana, giving us a rare opportunity to see behind the scenes of a stirring sport.

Señor Cardona's estate is at Guira de Melena. Although a fairly large and successful *finca* or farm in its own right and productive of tobacco and a variety of products, it is for its *Chinchinagua Galería*, its producing and training ground for game cocks, that Sr. Cardona's place shines throughout Cuba. Most of the more prosaic and conventional farming is left in the care of an excellent tenant farmer.

We arrived at the Cardona *finca* early on Sunday, and had ample opportunity to review every aspect from the egg batteries, where banded and blooded hens produce the eggs that produce the feathered battlers, all the way to the point later in the day when Señor Cardona carefully "bagged" a few birds to take in to the afternoon's fights in Havana. Nowhere, and in no other line, is more skill and care lavished on sport or farm product than is lavished on a well-reared fighting bird. Even each egg is numbered with the code number of the hen that laid it, and can thus be looked up so that, if the end product should be a fighting cock, its ancestors and their records of victory and defeat for many generations is a matter of record.

Though *Chinchinagua Galería* is a factory production line for turning out feathered fighters, the most obvious equipment for hatching birds in large quantities is missing. There are no incubators! All eggs are

hatched by setting hens. These hens, while setting, are as mean and irritable as the best of their sons. After Señor Cardona had showed us the coops of brooders, he took us out into a large yard where each mother hen who had completed her *accouchement* was busy scratching in the dirt and bossing her offspring. Geography and the fence about the place gave these little bits of fluff ample range, but each mother hen rode close-herd on her brood and bossily held them in a tight formation. Without a doubt, matron bantams are the busiest busybodies in the feathered kingdom.

When the cockerels in the flock change from bits of down to leggy, sassy, obstreperous youngsters, they are torn from the bosom of the family and begin the life to which they have been born for centuries. They are taken in groups to a remote corner of the estate, far from sight and sound of the female of the species, and the very name of "mother" is erased from whatever a gamecock uses for a brain. Here in this Spartan existence they spend a few months in *macheros*, or bachelors' quarters, each *machero* group under the dominance of a retired fighting cock. Here they learn to live with one another, and any disorder attendant to working out a social structure is speedily put down by the retired battler.

There comes a time, though, when these young future fighters can no longer be held in check by the old master cock. Here life begins in earnest. They are removed to individual pens called *rajones*, which are large enough to provide each bird with ample room for exercise. As a matter of fact, here they exercise even in sleep, for the only roost is a swinging pole, to which the developing cock must fly. Any touch sets this pole in motion, so the young cock must learn to use wings and body for balance even while he is asleep.

From time to time the birds are taken out of these *rajones*, and given a slight foretaste of the future. Trainers grasp the young gamecocks firmly by the body and tease them by waving them at one another. They learn thus to peck viciously and harmlessly and occasionally, for dessert, the young birds have their spurs wrapped and are given short workouts.

The cockerels are now about a year old, and it is time to begin the

intensive part of their training. They are kept in smaller sunken cages, from which they are removed several times a day for sunning, training, and careful feeding. An important part of the training during this stage consists of placing each youngster in turn in a pen with a weary, retired old battler—a bird who knows how to feint and dodge, but who no longer wants to fight. This develops both the skill and the confidence of the youngster.

When he now acquits himself admirably in his “fixed fights,” when his trainer or owner feels he is ready to face life, the young bird takes the last step on his way to the ring. His feathers are clipped close on his neck, under his wings and body, and on his back. He is changed from a thing of beauty, a gallant bit of iridescent feathers, into one of God’s ugliest creatures. He is now little more than a lean neck with a tuft of tailfeathers, mounted on steely legs. And finally, he is fitted with the “inherited” spurs.

The last step on the road to gladiatorial combat has been reached when the bird is carefully stowed into a sack and taken to Havana for his first fight. “Stripped down” for the ring, shorn of their fine feathers, these ferocious little fighters are so much alike that later in the day when we watched Señor Cardona pack away a few birds for the Sunday afternoon fights we felt we had watched those very birds grow up.

Lest we leave a false impression of the mercenary aspect of *Chinchinagua Galería*, let us add that this is an avocation of Sr. Cardona, though it has grown to be one of his leading interests. He had an independent income from the family’s soap manufacturing business, and the production and training of gamecocks was to him actually only a pastime.

We very much enjoyed seeing the rest of his spacious *finca*, and meeting the members of the family. Señora Cardona, convent-educated and fluent in English, had “married into” the sport of cockfighting, and had learned to enjoy it. Gladys and she found much in common in their household problems and in the care and education of their children. Señora Cardona betrayed the fact that, although she found life on the *finca* pleasant, she would like to move closer to the city for the sake of

her daughter, Mini, who was approaching school age. Not only did she want Mini to have the advantages of association with other children of good families—but it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep good servants so far from the city. Señora Cardona revealed, too, considerable enthusiasm for the freedom-for-women movement developing in Cuba. She dissented decidedly with the old Spanish idea that woman's place is that of unobserved subordinate in her husband's home, secluded from the rest of the world.

An interesting corollary to the cityward trend of the modern and progressive Cuban lies in the fact that many an American tourist is finding the very paradise he is seeking in what the Cuban leaves behind. Many a fine old *finca* today has fallen into the delighted hands of a tourist who flew over to "do" Havana's night clubs, and stayed to find in rural Cuba the peace and contentment which many a Cuban is eager to exchange for the vagaries of city life.

We were invited to one of the most interesting of these, an old Spanish *finca* completely modernized. It belongs to Ernest Hemingway, and is located on a high point of ground about thirty miles out of Havana—just far enough off the main road so that his "Havana friends do not find it easy to come out for a good time while I am busy writing," as Hemingway put it. Gladys and I enjoyed our visit with the Hemingways enormously, finding much in common. Both Hemingway's and my own "first love" had been Spain. The display of a number of oil paintings by modern Spanish painters whom Hemingway knew personally was of particular interest to Gladys, as art is her chief interest.

For myself, I am afraid my interests run more to natural history, and while I enjoyed the Spanish painters I feel that I shall remember best the household's two dozen cats. Taken singly, they would have been outstanding in any home. Taken collectively, as I took them when I opened the door of the room where they are confined when Hemingway has guests, they were overwhelming. It is a memorable experience to stand in a half-opened door and be engulfed by two dozen cats.

We met during our stay in and around Havana a number of other Americans who had dropped in on Cuba to have a good time and re-

mained to have a better one. Some of them were retired; others had bought businesses in Cuba. Many of them had found life on a Cuban *finca* more enjoyable than the night club life they had dropped in to see.

Oh, yes! We started off talking about clubs; yet we have neglected wholly here the type of club to which Americans in foreign ports are most addicted—the night club! Let's have a look at them.

By the way, do you know that only recently Pan American Airways has introduced the ultimate in night-clubbing? You can now leave Miami in the evening and get into Havana at midnight when night life approaches its peak. You are flown back to Miami at 5.30 A.M., after hours in doing Havana's glamorous pleasure resorts.

Too often, I am afraid, Americans get the idea that Cubans in Havana spend their time in going to night clubs or in working in them. Actually, Cubans are much like people everywhere; the majority of them go home and go to bed nights. But since American tourists are insatiably addicted to night clubs, wise Cubans combine courtesy with business acumen, and some of them stay up to keep the places open.

And what places! We can skip, for the present, the sidewalk cafés along the Prado and around Central and Fraternity Parks. They are for the tourists who stay and work their way gradually and unwittingly toward a Cuban *finca*. They are the easy-going, "old shoe" places, much like the Montparnasse in once-gay Páree. The tourist who goes night-clubbing by plane starts with a highball at Sloppy Joe's, the venerable progenitor of Cuban night clubs. The American who has ended up on a Cuban *finca* comes to town to enjoy the romantic music of the girl orchestras attached to the sidewalk cafés, playing softly and glamorously as he sips his drink. The streamlined Pan American Airways night-clubber moves on to the casino, being careful not to gamble away his return-trip ticket. He is swept up in the scintillant lure of the more gilded pleasure palaces, Sans Souci, Tropicana, Casino de la Playa, Eden Court, Zombies.

The American in from his *finca* just sips his drink, listens to the soft music, and watches the young saunter by in carefully segregated groups. The airplane bacchante imbibes in more gilded surroundings, in a place

built like a Moorish harem, like the court of Louis XIV, like an opium addict's dream of the Mohammedan heaven. Richer and more raucous—and more expensive—music blares out at him from the minuscule bandstand. The little patch of floor space is alternately engulfed by couples sweating out a dance, or overheated with uninhibited floor shows.

A high yaller gal swirls out on the patch of floor and melts into an ultra-seductive version of the sensuous rhumba. A high yaller gal, bathed in colored lights, swathed in obvious abundance of close-fitting bronze skin, bedecked in patches of costume brilliantly colored—and even more brilliantly omitted. Brilliantly omitted, because after all no costume is as beautiful as bronze skin. People have been making nude statues out of bronze for ages, and nobody sees any wrong in it. High yaller gal! Her slim, tense, dancer's body weaves and melts its way into the music and into the senses. A tom-tom beat in the savage, sensual music beats every trim line of her body into every tired brain, into the sensory parts of every brain, the brain that was there ages before brains were used to think with. The tourist in by plane to do Havana's night clubs is swept and swirled in the vortex of an inverted maelstrom by the savage beat of the music, by the sensuous weaving and swaying of a bronze body, weaving itself into the music, the savage music, the tom-tom music, the hot voice and breath of the jungle. The airplane night-clubber forgets he is a bald-headed businessman from Manitowoc; he is swept away by the tropic night and the tom-tom beat and the weaving bronze body; he is a part of something young and strong and fierce and ageless as the jungle and unquenchable as the fiery heart of Africa.

The guide taps him on the shoulder, and the savage dream is done, the fierce illusion shattered. "The plane, señor; you advise me to remind you the plane. But you come back, eh? Some other time you live again like this, eh? But now, señor, the plane!"

So he goes. So we all go. So you leave, too. But you come back, some other time, eh? But don't come back too often. You, too, may get deeper into Cuba than the night clubs. You, too, may end up on a Cuban *finca*.

CHAPTER III

Palm Leaves and Hershey Bars

Cuba is a narrow island some seven hundred and sixty miles long, ranging from twenty-five to one hundred and twenty miles in width. It comprises more than half the land area of the West Indies. Moved over onto the United States, it would reach exactly from New York to Cincinnati. Restyled, it would approximately cover Pennsylvania. It has an average density of population somewhat over twice that of the United States, a total population of five million.

It is divided into six provinces, their boundary lines cutting across the island. In former days these provinces were quite isolated from one another. Each province has various good harbors, and each has always exported most of its products directly to the outside world. Even today, while Havana receives three-fourths of Cuba's total imports, it can handle only one-fourth of Cuba's exports. The island's sugar, tobacco, molasses, fruit, rum, and its more recent copper, iron, nickel, and manganese ore, obviously would strain the port of Havana.

Cuba, although not an extraordinarily large land mass and lying wholly in the same climate zone, has variety because of different types of terrain, economic differences, and even more, the historic isolation of its provinces.

From west to east, these provinces are Pinar del Rio, Havana, Matanzas, Las Villas, Camaguey, and Oriente. With the exception of Havana province, dominated by the city of Havana itself, where we landed, we had planned to cover the island by automobile from west to east. In the main this was to be by the famous *Carretera Central* or Central Highway, which runs the length of the island and has important laterals to

cities not on the highway itself. This Central Highway connects the several provincial capitals, since all but Havana and Santiago are situated in the interior.

What is going to happen to Cuban life when the expected tremendous influx of American tourists begins, is a most puzzling question. Pending plans for a cheap and rapid ferry system between Key West and Havana will make Cuba and the United States very close neighbors. This enormous ferry, capable of carrying seventy-five trailers, two hundred cars, and thirteen hundred passengers, on a ferry trip of but six hours duration, is bound to have repercussions on smaller Cuba. Not only will greater numbers of middle-class Americans be able to visit Cuba, but at five dollars a passage certainly great numbers of Cubans are bound to visit the United States.

But the imminent introduction of a cheap and rapid ferry system between Key West and Havana is by no means the end of future plans for increasing travel and intercourse between the United States, Cuba, and nearby Latin American countries. Plans have been going on apace for a similar ferry system to the western tip of Yucatan in Mexico. Both countries are rapidly pushing to completion the highway systems leading to the ferry terminals in their respective countries. In Mexico the highway will begin at the tip of Yucatan, pass through Merida and the states of Yucatan, Vera Cruz, Tabasco, and Chiapas, to join the main trunk of the Pan American Highway running southward from the United States border to Guatemala. This will enable American tourists in eastern United States to drive directly to Key West, ferry to Havana, drive across Cuba to Puerto Fe, ferry to Yucatan, and from there roll homeward over the Mexican Highway. Already this has been named the Sunshine Circle Route. By this route American automobilists in a couple of weeks of vacation time can make a complete circuit through Cuba and Mexico without retracing their tire-prints. By this route Mexican and Cuban tourists can drive directly to each other's country and thence into the United States, with greater ease than in driving into many parts of their own countries. All kinds of new touring possibilities will be thereby opened for the American automobilist for touring nearby Latin

American countries including all of the Caribbean lands, easily and inexpensively. For subsequently a whole chain of ferries are proposed, to connect the mainland with other Caribbean islands through Cuba.

Unfortunately, the Cuban section of this Sunshine Circle Route was not completed sufficiently for us to make the trip down to Puerto Fe on the western tip of Cuba at the time of our visit. We drove westward in Cuba in that general direction to San Juan y Fernandez, through the rich Vuelta Abajo tobacco region of which San Juan y Fernandez is the center. West of here the road became very poor. Yet up from the coast at Puerto Fe a good road has been built to a place called St. Julians, which was used by the United States as a naval air base during the war. Here again the late war stepped up development of these hemispheric highways, just as was the case in Central America and Alaska.

The reason for the inconvenient, inland location of important cities and provincial capitals harkens back to the days of the pirates. Although Cuba is often referred to as the Isle of a Hundred Harbors, the Spanish in early days did not permit any but fortified Havana and Santiago to become important, because of the fear of attack. Rather, they established their centers in important agricultural sections in the interior, each with its own little port which was not permitted to become rich and important enough to attract pirates.

On the western end of the island is the province of Pinar del Rio, which is noted mainly for its fine leaf tobacco, probably the finest in the world. It is but one hundred and nine miles over the Central Highway from Havana to the city of Pinar del Rio, the provincial capital—over road so shiny smooth in places that it seems varnished. Towns are spaced rather closely, and some of them, such as Guanajay, Artemisa, and San Cristobal, are of fair size. The country is rolling to level, and neatly checkerboarded with fields of corn and pineapples. As it approaches the capital itself, the road goes through the famous tobacco region of Vuelta Abajo, where the expensive leaf tobacco is raised under hundreds of acres of muslin shading.

At Guanajay, the first large town in the province of Pinar del Rio, an important road branches off the Central Highway. It leads to the north

coast, to the ports of Mariel and Cabañas, both little port towns overlooking picturesque harbors for smaller craft. Mariel is the seat of the Cuban Naval Academy, and from its grounds the town and little Bay of Mariel present a beautiful panorama. During the revolution arms for the patriots were smuggled into this harbor from the United States.

Pineapples were just ripening in the rich Vuelta Abajo region. They were being cut in the fields, and the ripe ones were being rushed by trucks to canneries along the way. The large pineapples, harvested green, went to packing houses, where they were boxed for shipment to the United States. We visited one of the canneries and saw hundreds of girls working at long benches, stripping off the outer skin and cutting up the luscious fruit into slices. Automatic machinery then took over the task of cooking the pineapple and sealing it into tin cans on an endless conveyor belt system.

Dominating the Cuban landscape everywhere along the way are the stately royal palms. Even the endless acres of pineapples had royal palms jutting up from the jagged sea of pineapple leaves. The royal palm grows wild and adds a stately note to the landscape. It is also important in the economic life of the poor for the leaves are used in the palm-thatched roofs of their homes. The boardlike husks of yearly growth are used as side walls to their huts or *bohíos*, and the oil-bearing nuts are harvested for fattening their pigs.

The peasant *bohío* is the outstanding picturesque note in Cuba. Its overhanging thatched roof is neatly bobbed. It is painted in soft pastel shades—pink, salmon, light blues and greens—with wooden window and door framings often in some contrasting color. Invariably the *bohío* is surrounded by coconut or royal palms, laurel, or *ceiba*, or sometimes by flame-bloomed poinciana. There is often a patch of bananas near the house, and these take the place of a cellarful of canned goods in a northern home. If the family budget or larder runs low, bananas or their larger cousins the plantains are an ever-dependable food supply that can be eaten ripe or green, cooked or uncooked.

We arrived in the town of Pinar del Rio, a city of some seventy thousand, on a Sunday afternoon. We found a half-dozen hotels from which

to choose, at a much lower cost than for comparable accommodations in Havana. First impressions of the city were somewhat disappointing. It looked as if it had grown up a bit too haphazardly, and with too little planning by the city fathers. The narrow streets were only exceeded in congestion by the ridiculously narrow sidewalks on the main thoroughfares. To walk along these sidewalks was like walking a narrow wall, with the alternative of jumping down into the street when someone approached from the opposite direction, or grasping the stranger's hand and swinging around him like an *aleman* left in an American square dance.

There is another alternative to this struggle for room on the sidewalk or in the street—the use of the space under the stone porticoes of the different buildings. These are used especially in inclement weather, and their various levels are connected by steps of varying steepness. The difficulty in using these porticoes occurs when you are forced to detour around railings and counters where aggressive business establishments obstruct the space with merchandise spread out to the sidewalk's edge.

On Sunday evening with many other guests we sat in rockers on the hotel porch, watching the customary parade of the young folks. We were amazed to see how these young people dressed up in this provincial town. As much as in Havana, the girls here went in for careful coiffures and styles that would not have been out of place on New York's Fifth Avenue. In many cases the fellows wore the immaculate white suits for which Havana is famous in summer. All men wore either coats or the dressy Cuban combination shirt and jacket with four pockets, called *guayabera*. Shoes were shined to a polish not common in the United States. When I had mine shined, the bootblack worked on them more than half an hour, until they shone like mirrors at every point.

We made the acquaintance at the hotel of a young fellow who was a private English teacher, and he told us much about Cuban customs. "Among the better classes," he said, "you cannot take a girl to the movies alone even if you're engaged to her. You must take along another sister or an aunt, or some friend or relative to act as chaperon or

dueña. Of course of late, to some extent, young fellows and their girls are going out in groups, but never just a single couple.”

We pressed our young English teacher friend as to whether he had a girl or had any marriage plans. That evening in the hotel he brought us a lovely picture of his fiancée and told us about her. He said that he had met her when she had come to Pinar del Rio from her father's farm to go to school. They had become engaged, and from time to time he visited her after she went back home again, although it was very difficult. He had to travel all day by local buses, changing to smaller and smaller ones until he arrived at the farm. Here he stayed several days at a time with the family. Such a visit had to do until he could afford to take several days off again, in a matter of months.

Meanwhile, they wrote to each other every day, were much in love, but could not get married. He detested the isolation of the farm, knew nothing about farming, and did not want to learn. She was willing to come and live in town, but he didn't earn enough to support them both. He hoped eventually to locate in Havana.

We heard the same sort of story from several other young Cubans with whom we became sufficiently acquainted to gain their confidence. The rising standard of living in Cuba creates, as it does in the United States, some severe personal problems for the younger generation.

When subsequently we broached the subject of this young couple to a conservative, middle-aged business man, Señor Colina, whom we came to know rather well, he had a ready answer. His answer was the more interesting in that he went to great lengths to explain the conservative position in regard to strengthening the old Spanish type of strong family unit. He felt that the young fellow we mentioned had no right to get married. “He is too young, and the girl is entirely too close to his own age. In the Tropics,” Sr. Colina added, “a man should be at least ten years older than the girl he marries.”

We pressed Sr. Colina for an explanation of this. “You have seen the reason when you have observed our women,” he replied. “They bloom quickly, and they age quickly. When a woman is fifty, she is a very old woman. If she does not marry a man considerably older than



The shrine of El Cobre Virgin, patron saint of Cuba



Improvised, but sanitary, water container for the road workers of Ciego de Avila



The Central Highway is a paved arterial route all the way across Cuba

Our car is loaded aboard a native craft at Santiago for shipment to Haiti





Cleverly made shell figures are sold to the tourist at Varadero Beach

herself, they will become unhappy later, when the woman has aged and the man is still vigorous and young. Furthermore," he added, "a marriage is much happier when the man is more mature and plays a dominant part in it."

This is an illustration of the clash between old and new in Cuba. Señor Colina went on to decry the rise of the modern attitude, the growing tendency toward independence for women. To him the old-fashioned system, where woman sought her whole expression within a home dominated by a man, was best. He disliked very much the modern tendency of the well-to-do woman seeking expression outside of the home in clubs and social events, to the neglect of the personal rearing of the children. It was the age-old clash of the young, new, modern way of life with the old. It is a problem that has the same repercussions throughout the world, but here in Cuba it seemed particularly acute because of the greater conservatism of the Spanish family unit on which society is built. Señor Colina admired the United States and had lived there, but this was the one influence of the United States which he didn't like, the introduction of feminine independence and the consequent weakening of the family unit in Cuba.

Before we drop this question let us examine a belief that has become legendary. I have always been told that women age more rapidly in the tropics, and that Spanish women age more rapidly, as if both were the same. Patently they are not, since much of Spanish America is not in the tropics. I have always accepted the thesis without examining it too closely. It has always been so obvious. In any Latin American country you see for yourself that after forty a woman is old, and they are generally fat before this age. They seem to get fat soon after marriage, whether they have children or not. And of course, being fat is the easiest way to age in the tropics.

But why do they get fat? I used to take it for granted that it was because the Latin man likes plump beauty. Even their word, *hermosa*, meaning "beautiful," has much of the connotation of a Rubens type of feminine beauty. The other adjective of the same meaning, *bonita*, is much less used, because it has the connotation of smallness.

But after watching Latin American women dine, and comparing their dietary habits with those of our own women, I am convinced that therein lies the chief reason for their tendency to plumpness and premature aging. Starches and fats are eaten in quantities with entire lack of concern for the future results to the waist line.

Probably much of the lack of discipline in dietary habits is a result of their whole social and religious psychology. A woman is expected to marry but once, and at an early age. After marriage, custom dictates that she drop out of public life and retire to the seclusion of her husband's home. She is definitely out of the running then and is seldom seen and admired by other men. There is no divorce. There is seldom a second marriage even in the event of a husband's premature death. Under such circumstances, why need a woman bother with diets, girdles, and other disciplinary measures to keep a trim, youthful figure? In other words, does not the whole Latin psychology of woman's function and position in society conspire to age her prematurely? I know some few Latin American women living in the United States and a few even in their own countries who, daring to become leaders in public life, have not succumbed to the general Latin custom of becoming fat and forty at the same time.

But to return to Pinar del Rio. Our strolls on several occasions through the residential parts, especially in the better-class section, changed our first impression of the unprepossessing parts in the business section. Here we found well-kept streets lined with some really beautiful homes. Some of the more recently built houses were rather modernistic in pattern, with large window areas and simpler lines.

The older type of house, however, was generally a tinted stucco with columned front and with a low piazza opening into a high-ceilinged living room. Through the open doors we could often see beyond this front room into a comparatively formal dining room. This is almost a part of the front room but we seldom if ever saw it in use. It gives the appearance of being used mostly to guard and display the family china-ware and a considerable amount of bric-a-brac. The bedrooms with their high ceilings were also on the same floor, to either side, through the

open windows of which could generally be seen a luxurious bed prominently displayed. The rest of the room would be simply furnished.

The town of Pinar del Rio is by no means the end of highways in western Cuba. From the provincial capital it is still miles to the end of land on the western tip of Cuba. Several roads extend farther westward, and roads run northward into the mountains and toward the north coast. Another road runs to the south coast. We drove as far as we could go on four of these roads. All are being improved and extended, but we found the road northward into the mountains and through the beautiful Valley of Vinales the most interesting. It winds through rich, rolling tobacco and farming country, climbs over a low pass through hills of sparsely settled pine forest, then drops down into Vinales Valley, which is noted for its peculiar geologic formations. High hills—almost small mountains—among which are scattered countless little farms, rise vertically from the valley floor far into the distance. A magnificent view of this panorama can be seen from a lookout constructed along the road shortly after it crosses the pass. The road then winds down the sides of the valley and we saw at increasingly closer range the palm-thatched *bohíos* of the native farms and farmers plowing the fields with oxen.

As the road crossed the level floor of the valley it approached close to the vertical walls of some of these abrupt formations, which had somewhat the appearance of the buttes of Montana, except that they were covered with luxuriant vegetation. At close range the vertical sides were even more interesting, consisting of fluted edges of gray limestone eroded to give the appearance of gigantic sheets of stalactites. In some places the vertical walls were undermined by ages-old erosion to form great caves. Tall coconut palms growing close to the base in places blended their vertical gray trunks with the gray limestone formations. Concealing most of the bare rock formation itself was a great mass of vines and tangled growth.

Our highway across the valley led through fields of corn and several kinds of vegetables that are important articles of Cuban diet. There was the sweet potato; the *yuca*, a long, starchy root tasting something like

our potato; and the *malanga*, another starchy root known to us as Elephant Ear. This has a somewhat turnip-like taste. While some of these crops were being planted, others were being harvested. Crops grow all the year round in Cuba, so rich is the soil and so favorable the climate.

Our road now led into the foothills of taller forests and rushing streams, and ended at San Vicente. Here several fine hotels had been established for the tourist who likes country quiet and virgin freshness, far from the city and close to good hunting, fishing, and swimming. Nearby medicinal streams and an underground river in a cave make this section of great attraction to anyone interested in geology.

Another road we took out of Pinar del Rio led down to the little fishing village of Punta de Cartas, on the south coast. As the road was not yet finished, we had a sample of what a primitive Cuban highway could be like. Rough as it was, it was used considerably by oxcart, horse-drawn two-wheeler, truck and bus, serving the many tobacco farms along the way.

From Pinar del Rio we now had to retrace our steps to Havana, on our long trek across Cuba from west to east. Westward from Pinar del Rio is the province of Havana, dominated by the nation's capital. In fact, the city of Havana with its million inhabitants actually comprises one-fifth of the republic's population, and with its environs it also takes in a considerable section of the province of the same name. For a considerable distance in all directions out of Havana there are country estates. Many of the *finca* owners in this region are not real dirt farmers but, as in the United States near metropolitan areas, gentlemen farmers who like the country life but have their business interests in the city.

Cuba is narrowest in the province of Havana, so it is not much of a drive across the island here, from Havana on the north to Batabano on the south shore—a distance of forty miles. The drive across the island is through slightly rolling country of dairy farms and some sugar cane, with the landscape dominated by stately royal palms. Cuban towns and villages are generally close together, but this is doubly true in the province of Havana, for this metropolis is the only important manufacturing area in all Cuba.

Batabano across the island from Havana is a fishing center, especially for sponge fishermen. Here sponges are cleaned, clipped, dried, and packed. We visited several of these sponge packing houses and a fish cannery at Batabano. There isn't much to preparing sponges for market save cleaning, drying, and baling.

In the fish cannery they were canning tuna. Large chunks of the cleaned fish were cooked in huge cauldrons, picked over and cleaned by hand again after cooking, then packed by hand in the small tins which were sealed by machinery. As in the pineapple canneries in Pinar del Rio, many of the workers were women and girls in their early teens.

Outside of Batabano were shipyards where the typical wood sail and power boats used in fishing were built in long rows, entirely by hand. Cuba is fortunate in having a great variety of fine woods, especially mahogany, suitable for shipbuilding. The great number of little ports like Batabano, coupled with the fact that no part of the island is far from the sea, will always make Cubans sailing-conscious. Many controlling laws have been passed to foster this, so that Cuban intra-island and mainland small boat traffic is of necessity by Cuban boats.

It is from the port of Batabano that one takes the boat across the ninety miles of ocean to the Isle of Pines, the largest of Cuba's island territories. This island also can be reached—and more comfortably—by plane. Today an increasing number of tourists are finding their way there because of its medicinal springs. A large part of the island is nearly impenetrable swamp and dense jungle, the home of millions of birds and other wild life, so that it also offers fine hunting. The small fertile part of the island is very productive, especially of grapefruit, much of which is sent to the United States. Many Americans settled there after Cuba became independent, thinking the United States would retain the Isle of Pines. The place has an interesting historical background. The Spaniards never settled it, and its wild shores became the haunts of pirates. It is considered by some to be the locale for Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Even today an occasional treasure-hunting expedition is organized to seek a legendary burial place of pirate treasure.

The country is much more settled on the north coast of the province of Havana, because of its proximity to the metropolitan area. Out of Havana along the coast countless communities have grown together so that, although retaining their former names, they are all part of Havana today. With fairly good beaches running eastward from Havana, there are many little beach towns like Cojimar and Guanabo scattered along the coast. Cojimar is an interesting little fishing port, and Guanabo has come to be quite a pleasure beach.

A much longer trip out of Havana, to the north coast, almost to the edge of Havana province, is the trip to Hershey. This is a model sugar refinery town named for and owned by America's chocolate king. Here we visited one of the largest sugar refineries in all Cuba, equipped with the most modern machinery, and we saw the processes involved in converting cane into tons of crystal-white sugar. Rows of huge evaporators heated by blasts of burning oil boiled the cane sap down as it came from the crushers. From these it came out in a black, crystalline mass that turned to white before our eyes as batches of it were whirled in centrifuges which squeezed out the last of the uncrystallized black syrup. Finally, automatic weighing and bagging machinery turned out a continuous stream of hundred-pound sacks of sugar onto a conveyor belt. Such a refinery is called a *central*, from the early Spanish use of the word to designate a center to which cane was hauled for refining. But the modern plant we saw at Hershey, almost completely automatic, was a far cry from the old Spanish *central*. In those days slaves not only cut the cane but actually crushed it by hand-driven rollers, and boiled down the sap in open cauldrons. Systems almost as primitive may still be seen in remote parts of Central and South America, where the sap is pressed out of the sugar cane by ox-powered wooden rollers, with even the cogs made of hand-carved wood. In these crude establishments the sap is boiled down over open fires and the resulting mass cast into wooden moulds which form the *panela* of these countries.

To see modern plants such as we saw along the way in Cuba is to realize how far the country has come since independence. But modern-

ity has its disadvantages, too, as Cuba learned so disastrously in the Thirties, in what is still referred to as the Dance of the Millions.

After the first World War the demand for sugar rose to hitherto unheard-of proportions. This resulted in a price rise of from five to twenty-five cents a pound. Cuba, then as now the greatest single sugar-producing country in the world, found herself suddenly in the big money. A fever of wild speculation spread over the country as everyone tried to convert property into cash for investment in sugar. New land was cleared and valuable forests were cut down to make more land for planting. Those already in the business expanded to a tremendous extent, spending their new-found wealth in an orgy of building and luxurious living. Then came reality as the world suddenly found itself producing more sugar than it could consume, and the price fell to unbelievably low figures. With it tumbled the price of land and investments as well, since the country's whole economy was based mainly on this one crop.

Cuba has learned her lesson—the danger of being a one-crop country—and has by legislature and otherwise been able to reform her economy into more diversified channels. Today Cuba is well off with her sugar, which has not been allowed to expand to unnatural proportions in spite of the heavy pressure brought to bear during the last war. Since her sad lesson Cuba has, besides producing cane, tobacco, and bananas, gone into the raising of varied agricultural products which she had formerly to import, such as beef, dairy products, coffee, corn, poultry, and eggs. She also supplies the United States with a variety of fresh garden truck, especially tomatoes.

But in spite of attempts to break away from being a one-crop country and to diversify her agriculture, still about one-half of Cuban land is devoted to the raising of sugar cane. Sugar continues to dominate the economy of Cuba and sets up an economic rhythm through the year in much of the country. In sugar cane sections we find the communities somewhat in the doldrums without much to do until cane-cutting time in January or February. Then the cane cutters, many of whom have been without any regular work for the rest of the year, begin to earn

and spend. Stores in the sugar sections stock up with goods and do a thriving business. American canned products appear on the tables of these workers, and they live in comparative luxury for the few brief months of the cane harvest. There is food, hilarity, and well-being. Then, after the season is over, the bright lights go out. Many of the workers cannot afford even candles and oil lights, and they go on an almost wholly vegetable diet for the rest of the year. Bananas, the Cubans' cellarful of foodstuffs, come into their own again. Stores allow their stocks to become depleted until the next winter's awakening.

At the model plant in Hershey the company has done much to help its employees toward a higher standard of living. Comfortable modern homes have been built for them, making the town a model for the whole countryside. Various clinics, as well as educational and social services, have been established to go with the physical improvements. A clear attempt has been made to raise the children to a higher standard of living, and the result was particularly noticeable in the appearance of the children on the streets. Whereas in other towns and villages there are always a number of ill-kempt street urchins begging for money, here all are well dressed, playing together in an orderly manner, and with respectful answers to questions when spoken to.

Cuba, however, is not depending on the casual benevolence of employers for an improved standard of living for the masses. Labor has organized and has been rapidly forcing through a program of better wages and living conditions, both by legislative measures and by direct action. Unionized labor has in some cases been making such heavy demands that it has temporarily demoralized certain businesses, as often happens when labor becomes an aggressive and powerful force. Cuba is entering the "century of the common man" with a vengeance. Opinions about it vary. The conservative property holder argues against radicalism, and cites instance after instance of damage to business and physical progress. The liberal or radical argues for still greater advancement of human values in spite of costs, physical or otherwise.

These clashes of social and economic forces are most obvious in the metropolitan area of Havana province, where the tremendous difference

between the upper and lower classes is so obvious. Here the masses are brought together by a propinquity of interests to organize for their social and economic improvement. When we left the metropolitan area of Havana province for the sections of the republic toward the east, we were entering into country that was for the most part more tranquil and less disturbed by these modern forces.

There is, beneath the tumult and the shouting, the mass meetings, the parades, the blaring radios, an almost shocking degree of intrinsic good manners and good conduct within Cuban socio-political ferment. Particularly is this so when one compares the thing itself with our accepted mental picture of Latin revolution. I recall one little incident in Havana that sums up the case. I was interviewing Dr. Portel-Vila, history professor at the University of Havana and acting head of Sociedad de Cultura Cubana-American Culture. We were engaged in an interesting discussion of so prosaic a subject as the need for an irrigation program to help Cuban agriculture.

As we were talking, we were drawn to the window by a noisy mob. A large crowd was marching down the Prado with banners flying, headed for the president's palace. From the signs and banners borne, we saw that it was an organization of store clerks demonstrating for better hours and working conditions. Dr. Portel-Vila turned to me.

"As all roads lead to Rome," he said, "here all demonstrations lead to the president's palace."

"Will there be trouble—rioting?"

"Oh, no. You have been seeing the movies in your own land. They will all blow off steam, and then go home. This happens every day—without these the president would be a lonely man."

CHAPTER IV

A Revolutionary Experience

Eastward from Havana is the province of Matanzas. The name itself, meaning *slaughter* or *massacre*, is a relic of early days, when a great number of Indians were butchered here by the Spaniards. As is usual, the province and its capital city bear the same name. The city of Matanzas is unduly off center for a capital city; it lies on the coast and is only eighteen miles inside the western border of the province.

Matanzas, built along the curving shore of Matanzas Bay, is one of the important cities of the north coast, and one of the three coastal capitals. It is old, nearly as old as Havana and Santiago, and has grown up subject to dictates of geography. It has been called the City of Bridges for the numerous and ancient bridges spanning the Yumuri and San Juan rivers here. It shows a purer Moorish influence than many cities, in its variegated tiles, in the old clock tower, even in many of the churches. And yet, with all the ingredients from which picturesque charm and hallowed antiquity are distilled, Matanzas somehow falls short. It has achieved that unloveliest and rarest of distinctions for a Latin city—it has grown old ungracefully.

Perhaps it is only that Matanzas' face is dirty. Much of its waterfront is poor, squalid, ugly. Only after you leave the city along the sweeping curve of the bay, do you come upon a section possessed of any charm.

It is, for all that, a busy spot. Opposite the city along the curve of the bay a free port bustles with stevedores and ocean freight. Ships from the wide world dock there. We were particularly intrigued to find a Norwegian ship unloading cacao from warmer lands, and taking on a cargo of finished chocolate products from a busy factory. For

all its dirty face and run-down heels, Matanzas is important. It serves as principal outlet for two rich agricultural valleys which meet here. The principal of these is the Yumuri Valley, which can be seen distinctly from the heights of Montserrate Shrine a mile or so from the city.

This Montserrate, well worth a visit, is a famous hermitage noted for the miracles that have been wrought here, like many of these old shrines. The church itself, its walls lined with cases filled with little silver emblems brought by the suffering devout, is only mediocre in interest. But the heights on which the whole establishment is built, reached either by a winding road or by steep climb afoot directly up from Matanzas, is a fine place for viewing a large slice of Cuban city and countryside. On the level plateau in back of the church provisions have been made for holiday enjoyment. Here on Sundays and holidays churchgoers gather for outings after services. The place is almost an ideal picnic ground, even for those who don't care for the work of packing a picnic lunch, as the edge of the walls overlooking the valley below is lined with little booths serving refreshments of every sort. There are swings and playground equipment for the amusement of youngsters. Obstreperous and antisocial offspring—of whom every playground has a few—can be conveniently thrown off the cliff if they have not yielded to the tenderizing influence of church services. This fine old custom of combining religious services with a picnic holiday is commonplace in much of Latin America, and probably dates back to the old Spanish *Romerios* which can still be seen outside Madrid.

Outside Matanzas are other worthwhile points of interest. Nearby are the famous Bellamar Caves, outstanding example in Cuba of limestone caverns, containing some of the most beautiful formations in the world. They are electrically lighted in such a way as to bring out their best. Farther eastward and a bit off the Central Highway is one of Cuba's outstanding spas, the baths of San Miguel, with excellent hotel facilities. Natural water bottled here is shipped all over Cuba.

Matanzas is the only port between Havana and Santiago touched by the Central Highway. To the east the highway stays inland, though

there is ready access to either coast all the way along over lateral roads that are often fine, sometimes good, and at times less than that.

Thirty-five miles east of Matanzas was the first of these roads to lead us seriously astray. This road runs to the important north coast port of Cardenas. An even more intriguing side road running off this side road runs on to famous Varadero Beach and beyond. Later a new highway, to be called the *Via Blanca*, will skirt the coast from Matanzas directly to Varadero Beach and beyond, but this is not ready yet.

Cardenas was a shock, particularly after Matanzas. It was one of the neatest, cleanest, spick-and-span-est cities we ever saw. It was extremely interesting to learn that only a few years back it had been as ugly and slip-shod as only a port can be, its waterfront an unattractive, fever-breeding swamp. But Cardenas has had its face lifted, and here are the details:

Through the civic-minded efforts of the fine old Etchehabala family, owners of the Etchehabala Rum Company, the waterfront swamp was filled in, built up, and planted with tree-lined drives and boulevards. This company, too, through its model plants that deal not only in rum but in sugar, commercial alcohol, and candy, has done much to better the social and economic, as well as the physical, side of the rest of the city. But this is only part of the story.

In many a Cuban city we had heard of an unusual civic club known as the *Sociedad de los Mil*, or Society of the Thousand. This society is made up of local groups of public-spirited citizens who pledge themselves to contribute a certain sum of money monthly to public improvements. The name was adopted largely as a slogan, implying that the members are the thousand most civic-minded people in the community. Membership is not actually limited to this number, and in small cities seldom reaches it. Each household that subscribes bears the proud insignia MIL on the home.

Projects undertaken by these clubs are often costly enterprises such as street paving, sewage-system installation, or park improvement. Officers are elected annually, serve without pay, and cannot be re-elected to the same office. Civic improvements are decided upon by a board and

are carefully planned to take in the interests of the whole community. In addition to having a wealthy and civic-minded philanthropist among its citizens, Cardenas had achieved its distinctive qualities because it possessed an intensely active *Sociedad de los Mil*. Not only much of the waterfront but much of the beautification of the city's parks was the work of this public-spirited group. These Societies of the Thousand are the most active of democratic forces making different Cuban communities conscious of their own civic responsibilities, and nowhere did this society function more magnificently than in Cardenas.

Cardenas has an unusual water supply from a subterranean river which is well worth a visit. This river has furnished the city's water for many years, but in recent times the mechanical aspects of its use have been enlarged and modernized. One may descend to the electrically driven pumping station underground and pass into the extensive caves themselves. These are electrically lighted and furnished with walks and bridges. Under the electric lights the underground water takes on a variety of translucent greens that are beautiful to behold. A bridge leads across the underground stream from the main cavern into a smaller one out in the water, where a stalactite formation in the image of the Virgin is a feature of interest.

In another section of the city the Etchehabala Company has its own private water supply from a series of underground springs. Although much smaller, the caves in which these springs originate have been improved with colored lights, and an aquarium with many kinds of fish has been built here into the limestone walls and lighted from above. Visitors to these caverns are generally taken back to the plant and treated to a choice of rum cocktails. This visit may precede or follow a trip through the distillery itself, but it is suggested that the cocktails be made the last port of call.

But one does not tarry long in Cardenas, interesting and comfortable as it is, with Cuba's famed Varadero Beach only ten miles away over a fine highway. For scintillant green seas and gleaming white sands, no beach in all the world surpasses Cuba's Varadero. This beach extends over a dozen miles along the ocean side of a peninsula. The name Vara-

dero, meaning *drydock*, comes from the fact that in the early days pirates dragged their ships on land here to repair them, resting between forays on this enticing shore.

Today Varadero adds to the delights of nature's beauty the finest comforts of modern living. Miles of hotels and luxurious private homes have been built along the water, each with its private section of beach. Instead of the large hotels such as we find at Miami Beach and Rio de Janeiro, Varadero has kept to a system of very small hotels almost like private homes, accommodating but a few dozen guests at most. There are none of the Coney Island and Atlantic City types of boardwalk amusements to clash with the delightful home-like atmosphere of these hotels. It is a restful place to which to retire from the noise and activity of the city. Even in the busy winter season there is no crowded feeling about these little hotels. Many of them are converted private dwellings and they are generally run on the American plan with a price range to fit almost any pocketbook.

The hotel in which we stayed, the Casa Rosa, had been originally the beach home of a former vice-president. The modern wings were heavy-walled, stuccoed masonry, but the old central part of the place was a two-story frame affair still preserved in its original form, affording a good idea of the beach home of the wealthy a generation ago. Although built substantially, the house was quite open to the breezes. There were the usual high ceilings and many large openings for doors and windows, with movable shutters instead of glass windows. The separation of three of the larger rooms downstairs was merely suggested by columns and low balustrades. The entire interior was painted a sparkling, refreshing white, and the furnishings were not dissimilar to what one would expect in an American summer home of the same type.

We visited a number of the different hotels and boarding houses at Varadero. Some are of frame in summer beach style, with ornamental woodwork, but most are of heavy masonry plastered on the outside. In fact, masonry is a very easy and economical type of construction at Varadero, as there are large deposits of soft sandstone which can be cut and sawed into perfectly shaped blocks. Houses of these blocks plastered

and tinted are the typical construction of the region, and make for excellent insulation against the hot rays of the tropical sun. The floors are invariably tiled in the cool and colorful patterns characteristic of the country, and the roofs covered with the corrugated red tile common to all Latin America.

At the western end of Varadero Beach are the exclusive summer homes of the élite of Havana. To say that these homes are beautiful is to put it mildly. Each spacious home with its accompanying grounds is a perfect symphony of architecture and landscaping. Even the homes of the wealthy at Palm Beach cannot equal the display at Varadero. Architecture is a highly honored profession in Cuba, much more so than in the United States, and Cuban architects with the means of the Cuban wealthy at their disposal vie with each other in the creation of the beautiful.

The instinct to put on the best possible show with the means at hand is a basic characteristic of Cuban temperament, and we see this tendency expressed everywhere. For example, the more economical and lower-priced cars are not popular in Cuba, even with the high price of gasoline. They must have the larger *de luxe* models, often custom built and sporting a special paint job. Even in conversation the one who puts on the most forcible and dramatic act wins any discussion. Though this tends to make the lower classes loud in manner, dress, and talk, the same tendency for display in the case of the upper class does not necessarily result in bad taste. As we have said, the homes of the wealthy at Varadero and in suburban Havana are in perfect taste even though often executed with audacity in form and color. It is difficult to give this new residential architectural style a name. It generally has the fundamentals of the typical Spanish colonial style, making use of stucco walls, tile roof and floors, overhanging balconies, and iron railings and grillwork. But they also manage to inject some very modern touches—large window areas, rounded line effects, and piazzas not common at all to Spanish architecture. The customary interior patio is often sacrificed in favor of fine gardening and landscaping on all sides. Hedges, terraces, and arbored effects are frequently planned to blend with the

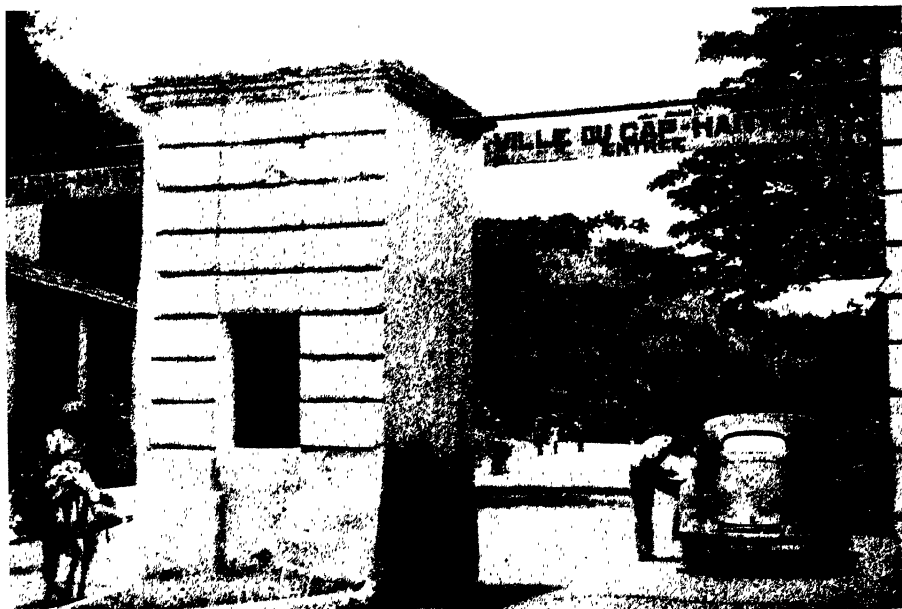
building, making a very harmonious whole. It might really be said that these native architects have evolved a distinctly Cuban type of architecture.

We were reluctant to leave Varadero, where we were hospitably entertained by Cuban friends, but after nearly a week of luxurious living and enjoying its sensuous beaches we went back to the Central Highway. We rolled swiftly along in the breeze, not too mindful of the hotter climate of the interior.

The rest of Matanzas province is fairly level country, mainly given over to cane raising and general farming. Proximity of towns and villages, some—like Jovellanos and Colon—of fair size, prevents the ride from becoming monotonous. The rolling nature of the country, always embellished with royal palms, makes the typical Cuban landscape anything but tiresome, with the picturesque white walls and thatched roof of an occasional native *bohío* adding an interesting human touch. In any of the larger towns one finds at least one or two good places to eat, with fairly decent accommodations for overnight stops.

Every one of these communities is totally different at night, and it is hard to realize that the gay spots that brighten the center of each town at night are the same sun-drenched, bare parks you passed by day. Attractive girls dressed in their finest come out and promenade around these parks in one direction, while the young gallants of the town circle slowly the other way. Those less actively or more romantically inclined seek out one of the many park benches. There is usually music, and a gay fiesta spirit.

The next province, Las Villas, is still referred to as Santa Clara province, since the name has been changed very recently. The tendency of the government to change place names is only equaled by the contrary tendency of the people to resist such arbitrary changes. It has long been the custom in Havana to change names of streets to honor contemporary presidents, heroes, and other personages. As a result there is much confusion. Some streets bear signs with the new names, but the people themselves cling to the old ones. Business places go so far



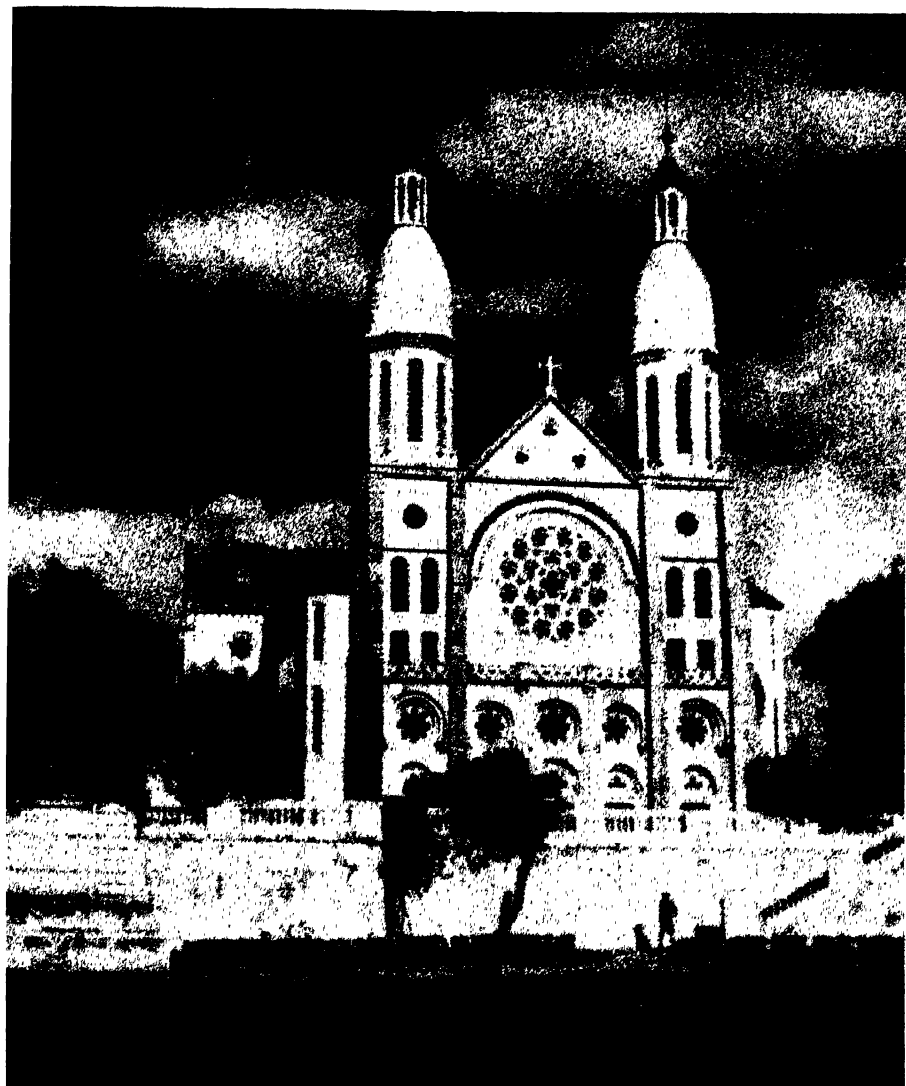
After crossing the Republic of Haiti, we enter the north coast town of Cap-Haitien

Native fishermen near Port au Prince, Haiti





Parade of palm leaves in the country back of Port au Prince

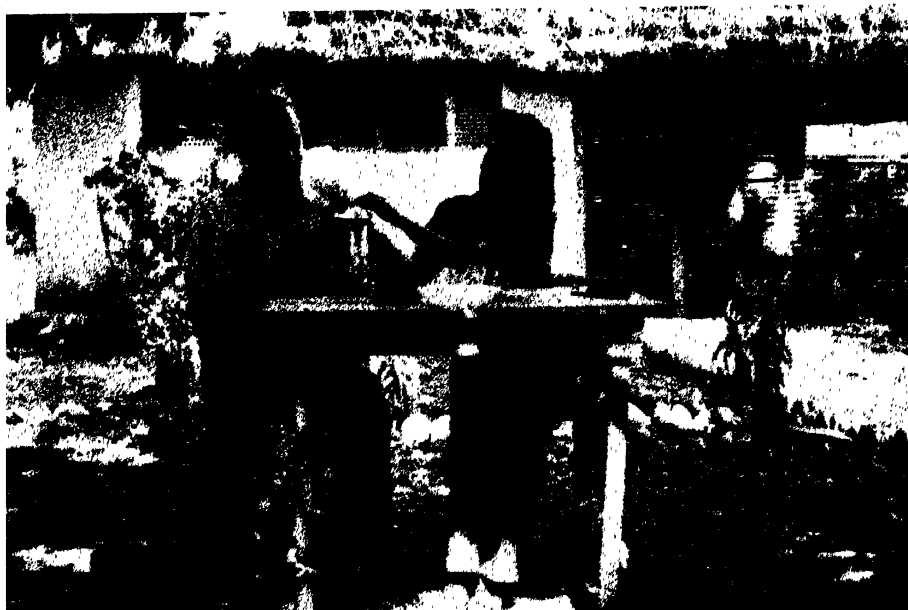


Lights on the cathedral of Port au Prince serve as beacons to ships entering the port at night



Cassava, related to our tapioca, is baked in large thin cakes

At home in Carrefour, Haiti



as to print their stationery with both street names. So it was with Las Villas province; we found only officials calling it that.

The provincial capital of Santa Clara is a typical crowded Cuban community of fifty thousand people, with streets too narrow to accommodate traffic. Somehow or other these places manage to get along, even with modern trucks and automobiles. It works under the same system as Havana, having nearly all one-way streets with blind intersections. The fellow who blows his horn first at these intersections has the right-of-way. As a result there is much horn-blowing, and as hotels are usually situated at busy intersections we found them very unsatisfactory places to rest unless we took interior rooms. Santa Clara has several old places of interest, dating back to Spanish colonial days when it was an important stronghold during the revolutions. It is noted, too, for cigars of the highest grade, the *Manicaraguas*, which are not shipped out for general consumption. The visitor is most likely to remember Santa Clara as the place where vendors pester all travelers to buy the special *turon* candy and sweet cakes for which the place has quite a name. Santa Clara bids fair to become an industrial center, since it is centrally located in the heart of fine agricultural country and has petroleum and important asphalt deposits. In the hills nearby are found gold, copper, and graphite.

It is a thirty-one-mile drive from the Central Highway south to Cienfuegos, third city of Cuba. This is a shipping center for sugar and tobacco, but to the tourist it is becoming more and more known as a sportsman's center. It is noted for its fine ocean fishing and sailing. Here the Cienfuegos Yacht Club holds an important annual yacht regatta and rowing contest, and the city boasts the largest jai-alai *frontón* or court in all Cuba. There is also good bird hunting, especially duck hunting.

With the exception of the metropolitan area of Havana, Las Villas is the most densely populated province with a number of large places beside Santa Clara on the Central Highway. Also, there are more towns of interest spread throughout Las Villas which accounts for the many lateral roads running off the Highway—more than in any other province. Laterals run to the north coast at several points, leading to Sagua

Grande, Remedios, and the port of Caibarien. In addition to the side road south to Cienfuegos another highway is under construction down to the old town of Trinidad. Gourmets will seek the north coast towns, famous for sea foods, especially oysters and crabs. Historians will seek the south coast ports, especially Trinidad. This is one of the oldest towns in Cuba, and the completion of the road from Sancti Spiritus to Trinidad will throw open to automobilists a fascinating and historic corner of Cuba. Trinidad is replete with old churches, convents, and private homes dating from the first decades of Spain in the New World, for this town was one of the earliest settlements. Streets are still paved with the very cobblestones that rang to the footfalls of Hernán Cortez and his lusty crew, for it was from this very port that they set out upon the conquest of Mexico. The town is built on sloping ground and is reminiscent of Taxco, Mexico. Down at the near-by port of Casilda one can visualize the scene that took place when Cortez arrived to outfit his ship with men and supplies before embarking on his mighty adventure. For those whose powers of imagination are not equal to this task, there is the quaintest of olden touches in the scores of ever-busy iron rocking chairs about the park in Trinidad.

For those who do not wish to leave the comfort and convenience of their own cars for hardier traveling via the Cuban railway, the town of Sancti Spiritus on the Central Highway offers something of the atmosphere of Trinidad in its old churches and winding, cobblestone streets.

It was on our side jaunt from Placetas to Trinidad by train that we had the most harrowing experience of our whole trip. It furnished us with a week of extreme anxiety and, before the drama was played out, involved a staggering assortment of persons as well.

It centered about a young revolutionary whom we never once actually met face to face, but with whom we felt well acquainted when we heard the last of him from army officials, local police, national police, secret service people, railway inspectors, a congressman and two judges, the Havana Tourist Bureau, and the American Consulate. The revolutionary leader with whom we dealt by remote control finally took refuge

in a secluded sugar plantation at the eastern tip of Cuba, while we returned to Havana where the Cuban secret service administered the aspirin for the trip's biggest headache.

As there is no highway as yet to Trinidad, we stored our car at Placetas on the Central Highway and ordered a taxi to take us to the train at Cumbre, a town about five miles away. We had arranged everything in five small bags which included—most valuable of all—a canvas overnight bag in which we placed our precious cameras. With loss of this equipment, irreplaceable in Cuba, we would have had to return to the United States to be re-outfitted.

We stowed the baggage carefully in the trunk of the taxi and took our places in the front seat with the driver, who waited for other passengers for the same trip. He finally located three men, apparently traveling agents, as each carried a small leather brief case. The chauffeur started the car and was just pulling away from the curb when a young man with his wife and three children dashed up, all five of them panting breathlessly. They had just gotten off the bus, and wanted to make the train for Santiago which was scheduled to leave Cumbre a few minutes before our own. The chauffeur said he would try to make it but could give no guarantee, as it was already late. The addition of five more passengers to the six already in the taxi necessitated considerable shifting of suitcases and passengers, and it ended up with the back seat a mad jumble of four men, one woman, three children, and a lot of baggage, all shaken up into an emulsion as we zig-zagged across fields and ditches and galloped through mud puddles on the way to Cumbre. Just as we came within sight of the station we saw the train for Santiago pulling out; the couple and their three youngsters had missed the train after all.

There was more confusion at the station as baggage was unloaded, with each of us grabbing his own and rushing toward the waiting train for Trinidad. Gladys and I took what were apparently our five pieces of luggage, including a canvas overnight bag. We boarded the train, carefully stored everything where we could see it, and settled down to enjoy our surroundings. Although the scenery along the way is

magnificent, it was not my intention to take pictures from the train because of the difficulties involved. However, when we stopped at a siding near Fomento a scene unfolded which I couldn't resist, a long mule train laden down with tobacco from the back country, winding its way down a mountain trail. I reached for the canvas overnight bag, and zipped it open to grab for one of my cameras. There was no camera there! A wave of shock and uncertainty swept over me as I dug out a drinking glass, some clothing, a large tin can. Gladys was watching me and I could see my own expression of dismay and bewilderment reflected in her face as I said, "This is not our bag!"

There followed a rapid and anxious search of the train on the off chance that there had been an accidental exchange, but there was no similar bag anywhere, and nobody appeared to be the owner of the one we had. We informed the conductor, trying to make him understand the urgency of our situation. At his suggestion we turned the matter over to the military guard present on every train. The corporal of the guard and I then went through the contents of the bag, and there in the bottom we came upon some important documents which were to lead us on a bizarre mystery hunt extending from one end of Cuba to the other.

Among these papers were a number of circulars of a revolutionary party and two letters, one unsigned but sent from the party's headquarters in Havana and addressed to a party living in a *finca* at Remedios. There was also a letter of introduction, presenting the bearer as a revolutionist in good standing. It appeared likely that this man was the owner of the strange canvas bag, but the facts that we had were meager, to say the least. Placetas was the last place where we were absolutely certain of having handled our own bag, and Fomento on the railroad was where the mixup had come to light. But what had happened? Had there been an accidental exchange of bags, or had it been intentional? Was a third party involved? Of what significance were the revolutionary documents?

Unable to answer any of these questions ourselves, we rested our case with the military. The acting corporal in charge suggested we

go to army headquarters in Trinidad to begin the investigation from there.

Meanwhile all the other passengers had learned of the affair and were either talking it over among themselves or busy giving us advice. Apparently the mishap of a fellow-passenger on a Cuban train becomes the concern of everyone. Arriving at Trinidad we went directly to army headquarters and made a formal deposition of the case, describing the whole occurrence in detail and listing the missing property with the serial numbers of the cameras and the lenses. The military immediately sent out copies of this report of lost property to various stations along the way.

We had letters to persons of importance throughout the republic, and one of these was to a man in Trinidad. He was the political leader of the section, a lawyer but recently elected as a national representative. He seemed eager to help us when we told him our troubles, and when we mentioned Fomento he called up a fellow practitioner and had him investigate for us there. When the call came through he turned to us radiantly, saying that a similar bag had been left at the police station in Fomento and his lawyer friend was making a trip to inspect it to see if it was ours. He assured us that we could surely recover our bag that very night.

With nothing to do but wait anxiously for news of our missing equipment, we made subsequent trips to army headquarters and were assured that they were working on the case. We could expect the return of our bag by the next day at the latest. People about town, the hotel man and others who learned about the case, raised a chorus of resounding reassurance. The Latin tendency to assure you of only what you want to hear was exemplified in this case to ludicrous proportions. Even we were absorbing some of this tendency toward wishful thinking, particularly since we thought so many people were working for us on the case. To give us additional optimism, the army headquarters showed us a telegram from Almeida, the address of the apparent owner of the bag we had, stating that he was an honest man and that he was not at his place of residence there. This seemed hardly a message

of telegraphic importance; if it was his bag our acquisition of it was fair evidence that he wasn't at home.

When a day had passed with nothing to warrant the surfeit of optimism with which everyone had buoyed us up, we began to appreciate the real gravity of the situation. Without those cameras the whole trip was off until we could go back for more, and more were mighty hard to find. We paid a visit to the local police, the only authority with whom we had had no contact, to learn to our chagrin that they hadn't even been informed about the matter. Furthermore, they were quite content to let the matter rest in the hands of the military. We called again on the military, and found that they were beginning to run down; they reported that they had no news and that nothing further could be done.

We returned again to the politician who had been selected by letter as recipient of our attentions. We were ushered into a large living room in his home and asked to take a seat as he was just finishing his evening meal. Eventually he came out and, apologizing for having kept us waiting, went over the entire business once more. We suggested to him that we call the Tourist Board in Havana, but he thought this unnecessary. We suggested that we return to Placetas to work on the matter from there, but this too he discountenanced. He was sure he could solve the case himself to our complete satisfaction. When pressed for more specific details he was vague. We told him that we had been doing a little investigating of our own, especially with the railway station master who had called up Fomento and found there had been no bag of our description left behind, but even this failed to jar his complacency. Instead he waxed eloquent, eager for the credit of restoring the bag if it could be done easily. He himself would make a trip personally by train that very night all the way to Cumbre, inquiring for our bag along the way. Pressed by the presence of many people waiting to see him, he finally ended the conversation with the formal and meaningless phrase, "*Esta es su casa; pida lo que quiere.*" (This is your house; ask for what you want.)

We learned from friends next morning that he had planned a trip

to Cumbre for political reasons that night, and that he would be gone for several days. We decided to return to Placetas, even after the army attempted to dissuade us by sending one of their men ahead on a personal hunt for our missing equipment.

At Cumbre we found the same chauffeur who had brought us over from Placetas. He told us that the married couple who had traveled with us had indeed a bag identical to our own. Having missed the train at Cumbre, they had returned to Placetas with him to take the Central Highway in the same direction. The chauffeur said he had undoubtedly exchanged bags with us by accident at Cumbre, and had gone on to Santiago without discovering the error. This seemed strange, in view of the fact that his bag contained food and other comforts for his children which he would need along the way.

Fortunately there was a station of the National Police at Placetas, and we presented our case to the lieutenant in charge. He was an intelligent and well-meaning fellow, and upon our solicitation he put in a long distance call to Almeida, the supposed residence of the supposed revolutionist who supposedly had our bag. After much delay he got the police headquarters there, and asked them to investigate and seize the bag of equipment if they found it, and to report back as soon as they had done so. But here the mystery and uncertainty of the thing deepened, at least for us. For all that day and night and for the next day, no report came in from Almeida. Neither were we able to effect any further contact. Meanwhile I had wired our plight to the Tourist Board at Havana, who immediately contacted National Police headquarters there. They ordered full co-operation of the local branches everywhere to help recover our lost or stolen equipment.

We were now entering the fourth day since our catastrophic loss, and were still without any definite encouragement. Clues, of course, were getting colder. We decided to return to Havana to seek the aid of the secret police through the good offices of the Tourist Board. The Tourist Board, immediately upon our arrival, were glad to make this contact for us with the division of the secret police specializing in robberies. They put through another long distance call to the police.

of the village near Santiago where the supposed possessor of our bag had his residence, according to the incriminating documents he, with unintentional thoughtfulness, had left behind. They learned that our bag had been seized by the police there. The secret service ordered it returned to Placetas at our request, rather than to Havana. We would have to return to Placetas anyway to continue our work. Two days later we learned that our bag had reached Placetas and we returned there to claim it. This was not simple, however. Since so much of value was involved, the local judge to whom the bag had been delivered had us journey to the larger center of Remedios to make formal claim for our property.

Whatever happened to the revolutionist we do not know. He was said to be an honest man who merely hadn't known what to do with our equipment. We were quite happy—perhaps happier than he—to let the matter go with the return of our property. We hope he was not inconvenienced by lack of his letter of introduction, but under the circumstances this may have been all for the best. With secret police, national police, local police, a tourist bureau, and a politician on your trail, who wants a letter of introduction anyhow?

CHAPTER V

Carnival in Santiago

Towns became noticeably scarcer as we rolled along the Central Highway into Camaguey province. They were even more so in the province of Oriente. Roughly speaking, the trip eastward through Cuba might be compared to a trip westward through the United States, with Camaguey corresponding to the western cattle country and Oriente to the mountainous area of the far west, with the mountains a bit scaled down to fit a smaller land. Eastern Cuba is frontier Cuba, with larger unsettled spaces, a hardier breed of people, a more democratic and liberal outlook. The people, particularly as we approached the eastern end of Oriente, were more often of a darker complexion. This may be due to a warmer climate, to more outdoor living, or to the proximity of the Negro republic of Haiti.

The importance of cattle raising in Camaguey was noticeable almost from the provincial border. The rolling and level country along the way was dotted with herds of cattle standing shoulder-deep in the lush grass. Most of them were of a light color and displayed the prominent dark hump typical of Zebu blood from India. This blood has been widely introduced into Cuba not only for its resistance to diseases troublesome in hot climates, but also because this strain develops better in the heat of the tropics. A Camaguey cattleman along the way informed us that although northern breeds like the Hereford and Shorthorn can be raised, they do not develop to their maximum as in the United States. They do not resist the tropical heat so well, and spend much of their time panting in the shade when they should be feeding. Beef cattle in Cuba are raised entirely in the open without shelter of

any sort, and are not fattened on grain as in the United States but are brought to market primeness on grass alone. Hence the raising of cattle in Camaguey requires little labor. Once established, a herd can furnish fine profits to the owners without much effort.

The wealth of Camaguey province is evident in its population centers, as we noticed from the first city we came to, Ciego de Avila. The main business center lies to one side of the Central Highway and at first glance was disappointing. However, as we drove in to the center of town in search of a hotel for the night we were struck by the fine plate-glass fronts on the stores and the excellent stock of merchandise. The hotel at which we stayed was one of the finest in provincial Cuba. Though well equipped and modern and with excellent cuisine, our quarters and meals cost much less than similar accommodations in Havana. In fact, all along the way from here on we got better food at lower prices than in the more metropolitan west.

Our daily program now became rather fixed and pleasant indeed. We arose early to do our writing in the cool, balmy air of the early morning, often with daylight before six o'clock. After an hour or two of work we strolled out for a light breakfast at some café. Breakfast was generally a cup or glass of *leche con café* and buttered bread or sweet-cakes. We found that a half-and-half mixture corresponded most closely to American coffee, but the Cubans drink it chiefly as a milk drink, only slightly colored with coffee. At most of these cafés you can also get orange as well as other fruit juices.

After several hours at the desk each morning we generally took a walk around the town or village where we had stayed overnight, making observations and taking pictures. Then we would return to the hotel and pack. If we had enough work to do to keep us until noon, we would have our mid-day meal in the same place; if not we would drive on to the next town. Even in less populated parts of Cuba, towns are always less than an hour apart on the highway. Of course, the larger the town the more select the eating places one has to choose from, so we always tried to arrive at a larger center for our meals.

Meals are invariably served *à la carte*, and there is generally quite a

list from which to choose. There are always several kinds of soups; several kinds of dishes with rice, potatoes, or macaroni; and several kinds of stewed, roasted or fried meats and sea food. Dessert may be local fruit pastes or preserves or canned American fruits. A meal always ends with a demi-tasse of coffee which is served free. Cold beer and wines are also available, in practically any place where one may choose to eat. The bread is always the delightfully crusty type, dependably fresh. Butter is seldom served except in the larger places, and then only on request. We found eating along the way a series of enjoyable experiences with far more pleasant surprises than disappointments.

With no definite schedule to keep we generally stopped at whatever large center we arrived at in the late afternoon. A little inquiry about the location of the best hotel usually led us to comfortable quarters at a reasonable price, averaging around three dollars per couple with private bath. However we did find the price of food out of line at the first-class hotels in comparison with room costs, at least according to our American ideas. Dining room service seemed to run much higher in proportion at these places, with no better food than at second-class places.

As previously stated, a great many of the restaurants throughout Cuba are run by Chinese proprietors. We soon discovered that we got the best food and the best value for our money at these Chinese-owned places, some of which were very fine. So after a refreshing bath and a change of apparel at the hotel we generally strolled about the center of town, spotting a good eating place. As they all have daily printed menus and are more or less open, one can become fairly adept at this process. Cubans themselves are quite the connoisseurs of food, which accounts for the fact that Cuban restaurants and hotels on the whole serve far better prepared meals than in the United States.

After our dinner we soon learned like the Cubans to enjoy that part of the evening. The intense heat of the day rapidly disappears with the setting of the sun. The plazas and parks, deserted during the day because of the intense rays of the sun, now begin to come to life. Well-dressed girls and young men appear, to begin the centuries-old custom of the promenade about the park. Gladys and I often enjoyed this evening

promenade and the refreshing night air for hours at a time, and spent many idle hours speculating on where American boys and girls would be at the same time. "In the movies," was our invariable conclusion.

Although the two largest cities of Camaguey province, Ciego de Avila and Camaguey, are on the Central Highway, most of the rest of the province's population is predominantly toward the north. Hence it is at these cities that laterals of the Central Highway reach northward. This northern section is also served by a railway paralleling the Central Highway. No important side road leaves the Central Highway into the sparsely settled south.

Level as the landscape is through the province of Camaguey, it is far from monotonous. The royal palm adds grandeur to Cuban landscape everywhere. Here and there too, in the extensive green levels of less intensely cultivated lands, we began to see more trees—not quite a forest, but a wooded park. One of the most stately and interesting of the trees dotting the landscape is the symmetrical *algarrobo* tree. Some of these grow to enormous size, not high but with a top like a perfectly flattened dome, the lower edge of the foliage forming such a straight line that the whole tree gives the appearance of having been carefully pruned. The black shade beneath the *algarrobo* is frequently broken by the whitish forms of the Zebu cattle of Camaguey leisurely masticating their cuds. The tree bears a small leaf in lacy formation that, when arched across the highway, forms a perfect and delicate frame for the bucolic landscape. The delicate pattern of limb and leaf against the sky is silhouetted frequently with bunched growths of orchidaceous plants. And now for the first time we began to see Spanish moss hanging from some of the trees.

The entrance to the city of Camaguey, capital of the province, is through narrow and winding streets. You expect them to open up into wider thoroughfares as the shops and business houses become larger but they do not. Only the signs on the business houses get larger and larger, and reach across the narrow streets, so that one gets the feeling of driving through a maze. The narrow sidewalks, continually crowding pedestrians down into the street itself, just add to the general confusion.

Although crowded with modern business establishments, even the central part of Camaguey has the flavor of being old with a distinctive air all its own. Buildings are mellowed with age, and the winding streets, which follow essentially the same pattern as laid out by the Spaniards more than four centuries ago, were made purposely narrow for defense against marauding pirates. It was founded in 1514 on the sea, and originally called Puerto Principe, but was moved inland the following year to be more out of reach of pirates. It is sometimes referred to as the city of churches. The old convent of La Merced was the seat of the Spanish court of justice for the whole Western world at one time. Most interesting, too, is the old building covering two city blocks now used as a museum and school, formerly the Camaguey Hotel and in earlier times a military barracks. The heavily vaulted and porticoed stone construction and immense grilled windows looking out on the parklike patio furnish an unending series of picturesque views and angles. The large patio is planted with a number of indigenous plants, and rows of palm trees are laid out along the many walks. Artistically placed around the patio are many of the gigantic *tinajones*, or great red jars typical of Camaguey province, each large enough to hold several of Ali Baba's best. These gargantuan jars were used to collect and store water in colonial times. Buried in the ground, they formed reservoirs keeping the water fresh and cool.

On the roof of one quadrangle of this old Camaguey is a large tiled dance floor shaded with a covering of ornamental metal work, and embowered on the sides with flaming cerise Bougainvillia vines. Here in the cool of the late afternoon and evening in days gone by the flower of Camagueyan society met. Here, too, when the rhumba was but a voodoo dance of African slaves, the mantilla-draped Spanish ladies were whirled in the stately *danzón* by courtly gallants.

We found Mr. S. Grossman, a local hotel man who had once managed this building when it was the Camaguey Hotel, to be one of the most interesting and informative people we met in Cuba. We ran into him while seeking information on airlines, as he is the local airline representative. Although a Cuban citizen and very much an old-timer in these

parts, by his speech and manner he could easily be taken for an American, as he was educated in the United States and has come into much contact with American travelers and businessmen. It was Mr. Grossman who gave us an interesting bit of information about Camaguey. Although we had commented on the prosperous appearance of the city and the province, we were both surprised to learn that in spite of the fact that the city of Camaguey contains less than one per cent of the country's population, its banks carry nearly 10 per cent of the floating capital of the country.

The climate of Camaguey charmed us as much as anything. It was one of the coolest places we found in warm Cuba, especially in the evening. Perhaps this is due to the flatness of the country thereabouts, which allows the sea breezes free play. At any rate we had plenty of opportunity to notice the weather, as we were in and out of Camaguey a number of times by land and by plane. It is the center for air travel to other parts of Cuba and to other islands like Jamaica and Haiti. In the city itself the buildings absorb the heat of the sun and impede the circulation of the air, but out at the airport there is a flat, unbroken terrain as far as the eye can reach. People come out from the city by scores on Sunday just to enjoy the fresh, never-failing breezes.

The next lap of our trip over the Central Highway was the longest. It is a hundred and twenty miles from Camaguey to Holguin in Oriente province, with nothing but small villages in between. Upon approaching Holguin we came upon more grade than on the whole trip to date, which was rather pleasant. When we saw the horizon of blue mountains ahead we thought we had some rugged travel coming to us as we had heard much about the mountainous nature of Oriente province. However the Central Highway does but little real mountain climbing. It winds gracefully up a low range, wanders across a high plateau, and then drops down into the broad valley in which Holguin is located.

As we got deeper into Oriente province not only the terrain but the vegetation changed to a considerable extent. This was especially true around Holguin, where we found ourselves in the midst of extensive stands of the common fan-shaped palms instead of the taller royal

variety. It was along the road in this section that the pernicious thorny *marabú* and the problems it causes were first drawn to our attention. We had noticed how in places the highway had been crowded by a tall, woody bush, like solid growth of young trees. It grows so close together, taller than a man on horseback, that neither man nor beast can force a way through the thorny mass. It crowds out over the edges of the road, making the Central Highway itself seem like the pathway of a maze carved out of that impenetrable thicket. When we came upon a group of sweating road workers clearing this vicious nuisance from the roadside we saw what a problem the stuff was. The workers wore leather chaps and gloves to protect themselves from the thorns as they advanced with swinging machetes. Beneath the keen edges of these swinging knives the *marabú* came down like sugar cane. But it was hard work and the men were dripping wet and constantly calling for water.

The crew's water boy carried the conventional water pail with conventional water in it, but his dipper was something of a novelty. It was made from an empty quart oil can nailed to a stick. But instead of drinking out of a common dipper as would an American road gang, no worker permitted the dipper to touch his lips. A hole had been punched in the side of the can. Each man dipped up a canful of water and, throwing his head back, allowed the water pouring from the hole to run into his mouth, much as is done with the spouted water jars of Spain. It was a fine example of ingenuity in making use of discarded material, and a testimony of their regard for sanitation, which we found a bit higher in Cuba than in most countries.

After traveling through country so unsettled in comparison with what we had seen before, we naturally didn't expect much of the town of Holguin, even though it appeared by the heavy lettering on the map to be a place of fair size and importance. But on taking a stroll about the town we found some of the finest plate-glass store windows we had seen in any part of Cuba. The stores were in the center of the town, on all sides of a public park which was one of the most superb we had seen anywhere. On one side of the square was a modernistic motion picture palace outlined in colored neon lights.

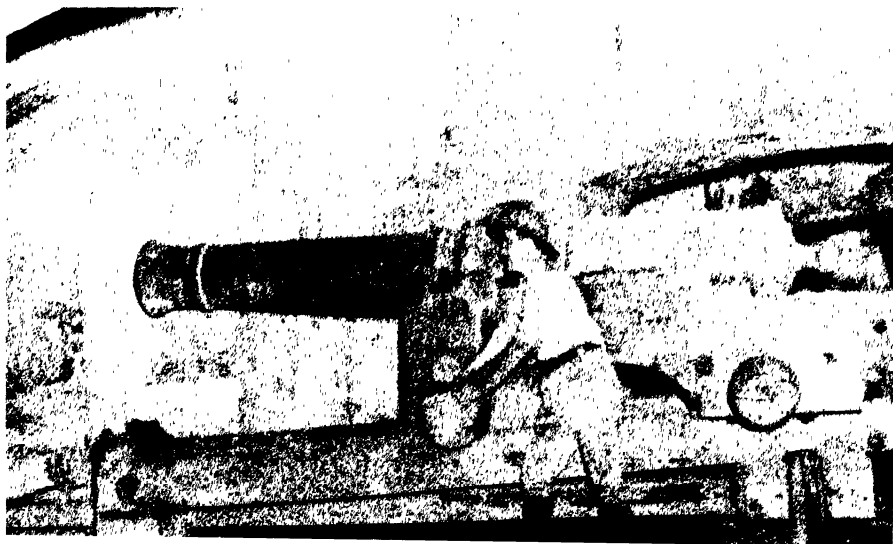
To reach Holguin the Central Highway goes northward considerably out of the way of a direct line to Santiago. In fact, after leaving Holguin the highway actually doubles back on itself to some extent, making a huge Z down across Oriente. The towns of Bayamo and Santiago, respectively, are situated at either point of this Z. The Highway was laid out this way not only to include Holguin but to put the whole northern part of the province into more direct contact with the highway system of Cuba, although there are still large areas of northeastern Oriente which are isolated from the rest of the country. Yet this section figures importantly in Cuba's economy. Several of these isolated northern ports ship nickel and agricultural products to the United States, and receive much-needed manufactured products in return, entirely unconnected with the trade of the rest of the country. These ports are unconnected with the rest of Cuba overland except by expensive air travel, or most difficult mountain travel by pack train. Yet at Nicaro, the isolated north coast port of the province only fifty miles from Holguin, are rich mines that furnished important amounts of nickel to the United States during the war. A half-hearted excuse of a road does run eastward from Holguin to the larger town and port of Banes, but it is not to be recommended for pleasure driving. Incidentally, the records indicate that on this peninsula Columbus made his first landing on Cuban soil. Considerably to the east and on about the eastern extremity of Cuba is the very old port town of Baracoa, the first town settled by the Spanish in Cuba, dating from 1512. Today it is an important center of bananas and cacao, though it still remains probably the most isolated center in all Cuba.

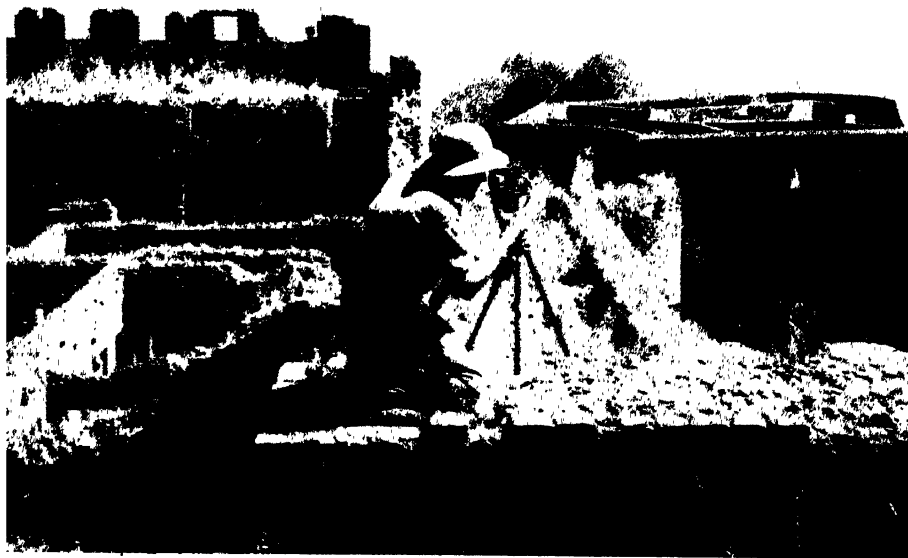
It is forty-three miles south over rather level country again to Bayamo. Although historic, this town offers little of real interest. The entire town was burned during the revolution by its patriot defenders, rather than let it fall into the hands of the Spaniards. For one interested in battle sites, the whole region from the coastal port of Manzanillo eastward to Santiago is literally dotted with battle markers. In fact, the southeastern part of Cuba includes most of the sites of engagements during Cuba's war for independence. This has always been the center



Ruins of Sans Souci Palace where a century ago Emperor Christophe held a brilliant court

Rusting cannon at Christophe's impregnable mountain fortress of the Citadel





The front part of the Citadel juts out like a ship's prow

Back view of Sans Souci Palace

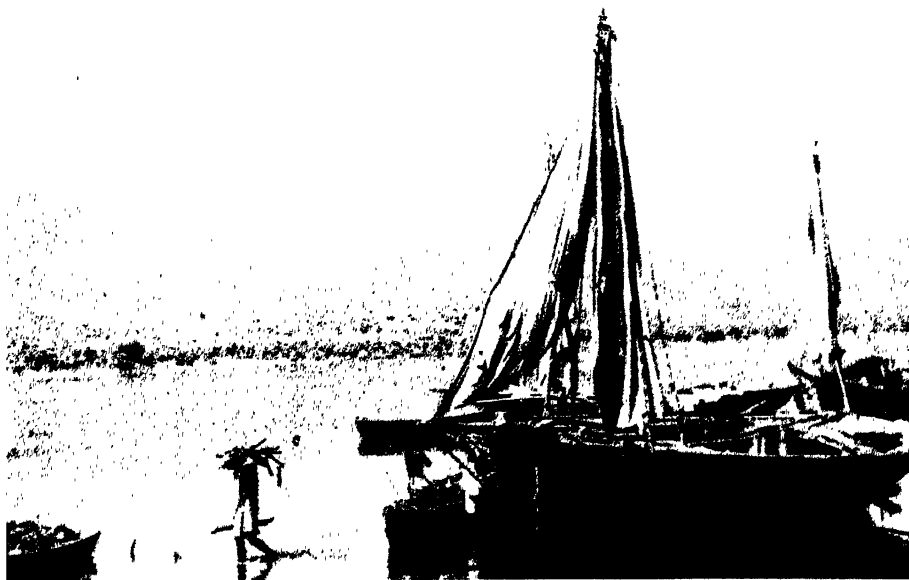




Sugar cane is still the important money crop of Haiti. Near Cabaret

Ebony-bodied youngsters of Haiti playing in the tropical waters





Native craft bringing in firewood at Port au Prince

Sunday riding in Petionville, mountain suburb of Port au Prince



of resistance movements, and even today prides itself on resisting Havana politically. It is in Oriente province that communists are most firmly entrenched. Nor is Oriente's resistance limited by class lines. Intellectuals and the wealthy claim that Havana drains their province of wealth through taxes which are not matched by provincial development. It is indeed obvious that Oriente suffers much from lack of adequate transportation and communication, but this is due largely to its very mountainous topography.

It was at Bayamo that the execution of the outstanding Indian leader, Hatuey, took place. So many stories are told about him that he has become almost a legendary figure. However it is established that he was the leader of native resistance to enslavement in the early days. He is said to have come from the island of Haiti, where he witnessed the gradual extermination of his people by the Spanish, realizing that when the supply of Indian slaves in Haiti was exhausted, the Spaniards would look elsewhere. He came to Cuba to warn the Indians about the Spaniards, urging them never to cease resistance and not to be deceived into acquiescence to the Spaniards under any pretext. He was finally captured and ordered burned at the stake for heresy. Asked just before his death if he did not want to go to heaven, he asked if there were Spaniards there. Informed that there were, he replied haughtily, "I do not want to go to any place where there will be Spaniards."

To the south we now saw mountains ahead as we moved on toward Santiago. This is the Sierra Maestre range and includes Turquino, highest peak in Cuba. But the highway keeps out of this range on but slightly rolling country until it dips southward at Palma Soriana to cross the coastal range into Santiago. We now encountered steeper grades, the only real mountains in all Cuba. We enjoyed this change to more spectacular mountain driving, but we were told that some of the truck drivers from Havana and the interior insist on turning the wheel over to a local driver when making the trip for the first time, being so utterly unaccustomed to mountain driving in the rest of the island.

Our first sight of Santiago was from afar. The soft gleam of its buff buildings piled up the steep slope on one side of the bay seemed in the

afternoon haze unreal, a hallucination, a dim and lovely dream. The landlocked bay looked to us, from that distance, like a mountain lake, and the whole shimmering scene seemed wafted on the warm air from far away and long ago. The old Spanish city played hide-and-seek with us as we climbed and descended the intervening ranges, dropping bit by bit its purple veil of haze, until finally we reached a point where we looked directly down on it. We swept downgrade through the outskirts, past buildings piled on top of one another on the steep slopes like sets of giant tiled stairways, and on up to Libertad Plaza over one of the few straight streets in the whole city. We turned onto one of the more narrow streets in the older part of the city—a street that pitched steeply down to the waterfront. We struggled for right of way with buses, trolleys, pedestrians, donkeys, and horse-drawn carts of every description, to arrive finally at the main plaza where our hotel was located.

From first to last, we were charmed by Santiago. Those steeply pitched streets with steps of tile-roofed buildings made Santiago the most photogenic place in Cuba. Resisting our urge to splurge on angle shots of the many quaint streets about the central part of the city, we planned first to cover the points of historic interest outside, spots which figured so largely in the Spanish-American War.

On the outskirts of the city is San Juan Hill, where the last real stand of the Spaniards was made in 1898 against the combined American and Cuban patriot forces. Up the steep slopes of this hill, now converted into a memorial park, charged the mixed forces of the liberation, including Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. In the midst of the batteries and carefully preserved trenches on the top are bronze statues of the typical American soldier of that time and the Cuban peasant soldier called *Mambi*. To this day the Cuban army wears the same kind of khaki uniform and wide-brimmed felt hat that was worn by our soldiers at that time.

Near the crest of San Juan Hill where the fighting occurred is the famous Peace Tree, a giant *ceiba*, under which is a bronze plaque in the form of a huge open book. This is the honor roll of those who participated here in the battles which ended Spanish rule in Cuba. The tree is

surrounded by an iron fence made from rifle barrels and bayonets that were used in the fighting. Much farther out of the city is the town of El Caney and the hill by the same name, up which the combined forces charged in much the same manner as at San Juan, wresting the redoubt from the Spanish defenders. More of the original fortifications remain here, and their moldering walls give an extensive view in all directions.

An interesting drive of some fifteen miles out of Santiago is the trip to Siboney Beach, important historically as the spot where American forces first landed. Today this is Santiago's principal beach resort. The road winds through the hills which separate Santiago from the sea, Santiago being about a dozen miles inland on a bay. It has access to the sea through a winding ship channel with precipitous sides. Siboney some miles to the west of the channel mouth offers a fine gently sloping shore. A monument on the beach marks the spot where the American troops first landed. From here they circled through the hills in back of the Spanish fortifications which guarded the narrow harbor entrance, and attacked the fortified hills of San Juan and El Caney.

Siboney got its name from one of the last Indian groups to live under Spanish rule. Today the name is preserved as the title of a popular song as well as the name of a brand of rum. The old town of Daiquiri farther on—another Indian name—is the birthplace of the famous rum cocktail of the same name. Thus has Cuba's past been preserved in song and pickled in alcohol.

A modern road runs along the winding channel from Santiago to the summer resort town of Ciudadmar. Ciudadmar is perched high upon a bluff overlooking the channel, and facing another El Morro fortification which is located out at the actual entrance to the channel. Below the bluff is the Ciudadmar Yacht Club, which is only a sort of social club with its own beach on the channel in front. It owns no yachts. Across the channel and accessible only by boat is another resort on an island called Cayo Smith. Here they do have yachts as well as better bathing, as the shores of the island are gently sloping.

On the hills overlooking the channel on both sides are old Spanish fortifications with rusting cannon lying about. The precipitous point on the

east side is covered with the moldering ruins of an El Morro castle. These are almost as spectacular as the fortifications of the same name in Havana harbor, and bear the same relation to the inner harbor.

A spectacular drive out of Santiago is the climb to the summit of the hills back of town to a point called Puerto Boniato, some fifteen miles northwest of the city. The road twists and turns in steep zig-zags all the way up to a height of fourteen hundred feet. It was built during the occupation, under the governorship of Leonard Wood, and is referred to as Wood's Folly. His object was to give access to the back country. Although well paved at the time it was built, it has not been kept in repair. Cubans have yet to learn the importance of road maintenance, and the remarkable feature of Wood's Folly is that it is still serviceable at all.

Another interesting trip from Santiago is the trip to the famous shrine of the Virgin of El Cobre, a bit over twenty miles north and several miles off the Central Highway. The church is imposingly situated on a lonely hill, at the foot of the ancient and diminutive copper mining town of El Cobre. The Virgin is not of copper and is named only for the town. The small deposits of copper have been virtually exhausted for years, and the village hangs on as a combination ghost town and beggars' paradise. Cubans laughingly say the name is spelled wrong today; that it should be El Pobre (poor) instead of El Cobre (copper).

A series of great stone steps leads up to the front of the semi-Gothic shrine, which is of considerable size and strikingly finished in buff and brick red. The interior is pleasing but not unusual. The back part of the church is the most interesting. In a grotto-like room with an altar in the back is a replica of the Virgin of El Cobre and a most amazing collection not only of the usual silver *miracles* representing parts of the body to be treated, but also crutches, canes, and aids left behind by people cured by faith.

While we were there a middle-aged man came in to make his regular visitation. He explained to us that he had been miraculously cured, upon appealing to the Virgin, of a long-standing disease. He told us that he had promised to make the visitation and offering once a month all his

life if cured. In an efficient manner that came of long practice, he fastened a cloth bearing a picture of the Virgin over the front of his clothes, dropped to his knees, and crawled on them from the door to the altar. When he reached the altar, oblivious of the people watching him, he prostrated himself, raised his arms dramatically in adoration, and prayed an audible prayer. He kissed the altar cloth, and the cloth he wore which bore the picture of the Virgin, stuffed a bill into the slot of the offertory box, and rose to leave. He seemed quite willing—even anxious—to discuss his miraculous cure with anyone who would listen. He was a very sincere person himself, and his sincerity impressed all bystanders.

Stone steps lead over this grotto-like altar to another small altar above, which is ingeniously contrived as the back part of the main altar on the other side. Here stands the original statue of the Copper Virgin, merely the customary carved wood figurine, diminutive in size, and richly dressed. During services in the church itself the statue is faced in that direction. At other times it is turned to face out from this smaller altar. Here the devout come between masses upstairs. There seemed to be no end of them in the several hours that we were there.

Our hotel overlooked the central plaza in Santiago. Although this place was deserted in the heat of the day, it was a beehive of activity at night with the time-honored promenade. Gladys and I took to participating in these evening promenades ourselves. We would walk awhile, and then sit on a park bench and watch the others pass. It got to be a favorite game for us to engage in idle speculation about this or that couple as they passed and repassed us. We noticed that when children were brought along the father was as much engaged with them as the mother. Both parents of a Cuban family always agree upon dressing their children to the limit of their pocketbook, even at sacrifice of clothing for themselves, and some of the tiny outfits are handsome beyond description. Cuban stores selling clothing for children always have more variety and better quality to offer than similar stores at home.

There are a number of American families in and around Santiago who have adopted the Cuban way of life. We met a number of them in the

Anglo-American Club. Most of them are with American business concerns established here, or have businesses of their own. Several hold manganese-bearing properties, of which there are a number in the vicinity of Santiago. Considerable manganese concentrate was exported to the United States during the war.

We were invited to visit the home of Mr. Storey, the American vice-consul here. He is married to a Cuban woman and his children have been brought up in the Cuban way of life, although his daughters were educated in the United States. Their delightful home, planned and built by themselves, is located in a suburb of Santiago called Emilio Bacardi. It is a one-story frame structure built high off the ground for better ventilation. The interior is kept cool by the usual high ceilings, and large windows and door openings.

Mr. Storey has spent some thirty years in Cuba, and his favorite hobby was seeing what could be grown in the tropics. He had a truck garden in which he succeeded in growing almost every kind of northern vegetable by watching the season carefully and controlling insect pests. It was interesting to learn from him that he did not plant during the wet season when everything grows rankly, but instead did most of his growing in the dry season when he could control through irrigation.

Mr. Storey is also something of a specialist in growing fruit trees. Asked why he didn't try temperate fruits like apples, peaches, and pears, he said that it couldn't be done successfully. He pointed out a neighbor of his who prided himself on establishing peach trees. The trees grew satisfactorily, but bore insignificant little fruit that didn't mature as it did in the United States.

We found the very considerable number of distinctive varieties of mangoes to be the most interesting of Mr. Storey's pursuits. We had tried varieties of mangoes in various places in the tropics, but had no idea that such an assortment could be found in any one place. "You know of course the *mamey* mango, the kind you see sold in the streets from those big two-wheeled carts," Mr. Storey said, "and of course you've had the *biscochuelo*; that's the finest of the lot." We admitted we were acquainted with both of these excellent varieties, and to convey an

air of expert speaking with expert we made reference to the tart little Toledo, the larger red and green Santa Cruz varieties.

"But here's one you don't know about!" Mr. Storey said as he pulled a fruit from a tree. "It's a mango that can be eaten with a spoon." He ran a knife around the middle of it, twisted the two sections, and lifted one half off the seed intact, cupped like a miniature melon. What a boon this mango could be to mango fanciers, for the great problem of how to eat a mango gracefully in public has done much to prevent this excellent fruit from having a wider appeal. Generally I have felt that mangoes may be eaten with propriety only in the bathtub, or at least in the bathroom. The skin of a mango is easily peeled off, but it is the fibrous seed inside that causes the difficulty. Two large slices can be cut from the flat sides, but if you wish to eat all the good meat close to the seed there is nothing suited to the task like primitive attack with fingers and teeth, stripping the peachlike flesh from the fibres that radiate from the seed by drawing them through the teeth. Mechanically it is much the same principle as is employed in the cotton gin.

Even when not committed to a definite trip around Santiago, there is no waste time for a photographer in the central part of the city. The tiled roofs on either side rising up the steep slopes like a giant's stairway, the steep streets that at times give up being streets and become stairways, the ornamental iron railings and picturesque balconies overhanging the streets, all contribute an endless variety of picture possibilities.

Vendors of fruits and produce from the country jam the streets with their big-wheeled carts, yelling or singing their wares. Trash collectors crowd through, announcing their journey by loud blasts from a cow's horn. Strings of pack mules clatter over the cobblestones, coming into the city from the back country. Amidst all this, modern automobiles and trucks struggle for passage, trying to drive ahead the pedestrians (who much prefer the middle of the street to the impossibly narrow sidewalks) by incessant blowing of horns.

As in any old city, there are a number of interesting public buildings to visit, most imposing of which is surely the cathedral. Here in one of the crypts lie the bones of Diego Velásquez, founder of Santiago and

first governor of Cuba, as well as many another of the ancient great. Santiago's cathedral is made doubly impressive by the fact that it is built high on an elevated square in the center of the city. This raises the building, huge in itself, to tower high over everything else in the city, with the solitary angel at the top surely closer to her fellows than to the humans below. The architectural plan necessitated leaving a considerable elevated area all around the cathedral, above the streets but not supporting the building itself. So the cathedral fathers figured that here was valuable space that could be made to earn revenue for the church. They converted all this into small business places beneath the church on all four sides which have been rented out for bars, curio shops, and cafés. Cubans say that whereas Christ drove the money changers from the temple, the Santiagoans brought them back.

In cultural and allied fields much of what Santiago has to show the traveler she owes to her favorite son, Emelio Bacardi. His name has rung around the world as founder of the famous Bacardi Rum Company, but locally he is better known as a leading citizen and man of culture. He has served as mayor of the city, and has written fiction and painted under his own name. He founded the Bacardi Museum in Santiago, where he has collected many things bearing particular emphasis on the history of Cuba from the days of the Spanish conquest to the wars for independence. There is at least something in the museum from each of the great Cuban patriot leaders, Martí, Gómez, Macéó, and others. There are also many relics from the American occupation.

It is very likely that more tourists will visit the Bacardi Gardens at the brewery and distillery near the edge of town, though they are less conveniently located than the museum. Here at the gardens free beer is passed out all the day long to the string of visitors who come to "view the gardens." Free banquets are also given here for groups of outstanding visitors.

By coincidence we came into Santiago just as preparations for their greatest celebration of the year were coming to the boiling point. The peak of this celebration is Santiago Day, July 25th, a mad festival dating

back to slave days, when at the end of the harvest slaves were given a week of freedom to engage in festivities.

There was a fever of madness in the air, a rising torrent of carnival. It broke out first in the barber shops and spread rapidly to the stores. Its symptoms were a riotous display of costumes, masks, hats of every sort. The wide world, the wild world, and the fabulous past were ransacked for colorful raiment. There were hopped up versions of colorful costumes from every nook and cranny of the Indian past. Spain, China, Mexico, Turkey, France, and the distant islands of the seven seas were represented with embellishments. There was lace and color and silk and shimmer of spangled clowns' costumes, of court dress of another age, of undress from a harem. There were costumes that owed a debt to no one—that were but ribbon and braid, appliqué and ruffle, sequin and spangle, crazy-quilt patches of crazy colors.

The eve of Santiago Day is given over to costume balls, private and public, exclusive and free-for-all, all over the city. Of these one of the largest and showiest is held at the Luz de Oriente Club, an exclusive club of Negro or mulatto membership. On the strength of our press cards we won admission to this gala affair. The gaily costumed participants began arriving at nine, and for hours an unbroken stream of cars disgorged a dazzling array of colored society at its colorful best. Nowhere have I seen this event matched for brilliant costume. And the tide of merry-makers seemed endless. Long after the great dance floor was jammed, people poured into the hall, boiled over into adjoining rooms, draped over the balcony. We visited other clubs throughout the city that night, but none was as dazzling as this. Over at the Aponte Club for instance, the city's—or the world's—most exclusive colored club, things were more formal and decorous.

Nor were any of the white or mixed clubs about the town able to put quite the same spirit into the night's events. This is a festival born of a slave's brief days of freedom long ago; a white man's copy of it is just a bit synthetic. The aristocratic and exclusive Aponte Club doesn't remember quite what the affair is all about. And only at the Luz de Oriente Club did they achieve the proper density of population so essen-

tial to setting up the chain reaction of exuberant ecstasy. True carnival is a contagion spread best by the closest contact.

No one knew when the gala night ended and the riotous day began. There was a brief pause, a thinning out of humanity between dawn and sunrise. There was a pause in the chatter of *maracas* and *claves*. But the ceaseless tom-tom beat from near and far seeped into our very pores to tie together a wild night and a mad day. Sometime shortly after sunrise was the carnival storm center.

First there were only people, but these coagulated quickly into crowds. These crowds swirled about the music in the streets, picked up the jungle beat of the music with numbed and tireless feet, shuffling feet, feet hypnotized by rhythm of drum and *maraca* and the primitive melody of jungle chants. Little groups of entranced devotees swelled into bigger groups of marching mankind, ponderous humanity possessed of imponderable spirit, irresistible humanity writhing and twisting and shuffling along, tuned body and soul to the wave length of primitive drum beat and savage chant, tearing out of entranced flesh and bone the primitive marching dances from which rumba and conga grew. Slowly the crowd filtered about to grow into homogeneous groups called *comparsas* or ward groups, in preparation for the day's big parade, in anticipation of the prizes awarded to the best *comparsas*. Oblivious to sultry heat, to stultifying dust, to sodden fatigue, they shuffled on. Here and there one or two fell out of formation to stop for drinks at the gaily decorated stands along the way, and frequently we saw an entranced devotee carrying a bottle along in the parade. But all in all the vast crowd was a mob drunk on ecstasy, glazed of eye and with countenance lit from within. There were no fights, no disagreements, no brawls, as if everyone was too centered on the great Thing of the carnival itself to show personal concern. It was orderly but implacable, and we got the odd feeling as the crowd swelled to fill the streets completely that they would shove buildings aside to make the streets wider still. As the big parade began down Avenida Martí it gave us goose pimples. We were far down the avenue as the vast throng turned into it, and it was a slow-moving tidal wave of entranced flesh. Street traffic and bystanders were

brushed aside, and we wouldn't have been surprised at all to see automobiles and power poles and cornices of buildings bob to the surface of that vast throng like debris on a wave. Yet in the midst of enthralled, onswEEPing chaos there was unity and form, for each *comparsa* strove to carry out some common motif in color or costume.

As the great brown tide advanced, as it rolled and weaved and shuffled and writhed and twisted by beneath our balcony, there was added to the human flood a maddening crescendo of rhythmic sound. To the ceaseless drumbeats that reached out from everywhere there was added a harsh overtone of rhythmic clatter and clang, as musicians and mob beat out time on pieces of steel, or bottles, or empty boxes, or anything else that would give out a ringing sound.

There was no clearly defined end to the parade, as there had been a beginning. It merely slowed down and thinned out and left little tidal pools of humankind at street corners. Bystanders, who had been swept out of the hard channel of stone street and stone walls of buildings, swirled idly back again. The afternoon shadows crept out to lay the sultry heat, to blot up the smell of dusty sweat, to bury the litter and trash sloughed off by packed humanity.

We remembered then that we had another job for our cameras before the sun went down. If the carnival hadn't caused too much forgetfulness, our little Willys was due to be loaded for shipment to Haiti, where we expected to rejoin her after a flying visit to Jamaica.

There was no regular cargo service from Cuba's eastern tip to neighboring Haiti, but we had managed to locate a native sailingcraft of questionable seaworthiness which had been plighted to ferry our car across. This was a Haitian *goleta*, a tired little tub, brave and dissolute and with crew to match, and euphemiously named the *Vierge Immaculée*—the Immaculate Virgin. It was without motor, without radio, without ambition, but it was headed for Haiti and we had no choice. It was a vessel of fifty tons burden, which meant that it would hit the bottom of Davy Jones's locker with a very gentle bump if anything went wrong.

The *Vierge Immaculée's* far from immaculate crew had measured the space on the vessel's narrow deck, and had found that they could just

squeeze the Willys in between the two masts. Planks were being laid from the dock to the top of the gunwales, and I thought it best since I was there to nurse the car aboard on these planks in person. With block and tackle rigged between the masts, it was finally worked and warped and squeezed into place.

Then a motorboat gainfully employed as a tugboat took over, and towed the crusty little tub out of the harbor, to a point where the soggy old *Vierge Immaculée* could catch a bit more breeze, and where it would require less expert navigation. Our spirits were low as we stood on shore and watched the motorboat set the *Vierge* adrift, as the lackadaisical crew hoisted a tattered sail and scooped up a tired puff of breeze, as she wallowed groggily out to sea. If the wind blew, it would blow her to Haiti in a couple of days. If it blew too hard, it would blow her to the bottom of the sea. If it didn't blow at all—

CHAPTER VI

Black and White in Jamaica

The famed mountainous beauty of Jamaica was clearly evident when first we saw it from the air. Our Pan American plane flew directly across it from north to south on our way from Camaguey, Cuba, to Kingston, Jamaica. After a fleeting glimpse of white beaches lined with plumed palms, the mountains swept in, sheer up under us, as if to brush the fuselage of the plane. Pearly white parcels of clouds, lodged in mountain pockets, radiated concentric rings of rainbow hue around the shadow our plane cast on them. Isolated little huts, common enough in the valleys but occasional even on the peaks, clustered about the patches of cleared land. Mountain and valley alike were covered with dense tropical foliage; there were no bare, uncovered rocks in all this lush tropical land. A silvery river played hide-and-seek in the green mountain valleys. Now and then neat little towns appeared suddenly under the wings of the plane, with slick, dark ribbons of roads radiating out from them. More roadways twisted in sinuous fashion up and down the winding valleys and across the mountain shoulders, clinging precariously. From the abundance of these shiny asphalt ribbons, we knew that many miles of highway adventure awaited us in this country.

Roads and villages became more common as we passed over the mountainous backbone of the country and were out over the plains of the south side, plains of pleasing green, squares of sugar cane, bananas, coconut palms—a patchwork quilt in variegated greens. Then the plane dropped rapidly, the bay and the harbor city of Kingston slid by under the wings, and we were but barely skimming over the water. From the plane windows we could not see the narrow neck of land directly under

us, called the Palisadoes, on which we were landing. There was the slight crunch of tires on the runway, and we were rolling up to the airport.

On the drive into Kingston the position of the landing field in relation to the city became more apparent. Although Kingston is but a mile or two across the bay we had to circle the entire bay by road for a dozen miles or more to reach the city. The chauffeur explained that much of this drive was on a built-up causeway, over what had once been only a chain of small islands. The filling-in process had been started in the early days of settlement to prevent pirates from slipping in between these islands on plundering forays not feasible through the well-guarded harbor entrance at Port Royal.

Kingston first impressed, in contrast to the Spanish West Indies, by its neatness and orderliness. For example, the streets are laid out in east-west and north-south directions, and there are none of the haphazard, winding, crooked streets so characteristic of many Cuban towns. These streets are well drained and smoothly paved, too, and though most of the houses are of frame none are ramshackle. The predominantly frame architecture of the city makes it distinctive from the Spanish West Indies towns of tinted plaster and masonry. Most of the large business places in the central city are more on the Spanish type, built of masonry and with deep porticoes over tiled walks, but many of the minor places of business and practically all of the dwellings are frame.

The typical frame house in Kingston is distinctive, even though poor and small. In fact, smallness is a predominant feature of native homes throughout the island. In town and country these houses struck us as being so miniature as to appear play houses. In Kingston many of them are entered by a short flight of steps from the street, leading up onto a diminutive roofed porch. The steps are a necessity if the postage-stamp porch is not; for when the house is not set upon a bank above street level it is set up on a masonry wall, with the space under the floor devoted to storage. The front room, used as a general visiting and living room, though occupying the width of the house, is quite small. The cubicles of bedrooms in back of it offer little room for tossing in sleep. In this salu-

brious climate the people live out-of-doors so much that they have little need for large interiors.

The windows are a distinctive feature of local architecture. Warm as the climate is, windows and doors are invariably glazed. Yet on either side of the glass are open slits covered by adjustable wooden shutters. This may be a compromise between the English use of glass and the tropical custom of never using any. The use of porches is also probably English. At any rate the long rule of the British has left definite effects on the islands and the people.

To us nothing seemed stranger than hearing the ebony Jamaicans speaking the king's English, nor is it an English at all easy to understand. Added to unfamiliar English pronunciations rendered with a Negro drawl, are many words that are not English. These, most of them nouns, trace back as a rule to African tongues. Nor is this odd when one recalls that less than one per cent of the island's population is white. There are of course other bloods represented, especially Chinese and East Indian. In fact, even the East Indians outnumber the whites.

Although Jamaica was originally a Spanish colony, having been captured by the English in 1655, not much of Spanish influence remains, and the Spanish practically exterminated the peaceful Arawak Indians found here at the time of discovery. So the present culture and language of the native Negro is a transplanted African culture tutored in a foreign land under British language, laws, and customs. The dark Jamaican has certainly acquired the British love of law and order and is a peaceful citizen. He most certainly looks upon Jamaica as his own country. The Negro of Jamaica today does not suffer from anything in the way of an inferiority complex, for many of his race have risen to positions of influence and wealth. Negroes participate in the law-making and have passed laws for their own protection. Those with money now have access to the best hotels, places formerly limited to white patronage. The upper-class Jamaica Negro sees no reason why he should be a victim of discrimination in his own land. If this is uncomfortable for a few of the whites who live or visit there, it has given the Negro a carriage and a self-respect not seen elsewhere.

There is, after all, nothing real on which to base discrimination of any sort. The Jamaican of color is very clean. Seldom does one see even the poorest dressed in filthy clothes, as one is likely to see among the very poor, colored or otherwise, in other countries. Kingston has many churches, and on Sundays the streets are filled with neatly dressed Jamaicans going to or coming from their many services. In some of them we heard singing accompanied by native drums and tambourines, and the custom of shouting out had much the earmarks of Negro spiritual meetings in many parts of the United States.

In Kingston there are all kinds of clubs; Jamaica is almost as club-conscious as Cuba. For those who belong to no particular club, there are innumerable public places with all kinds of strange names, many of them derived from American places of amusement, such as Pennsylvania Pavilion, Big Apple Club, Golden Eagle, New York Club, Stork Club, Baltimore Club, Atomic Bar, etc.

In the matter of curious names, though in a very different category, the two-wheeled pushcarts provide an amusing and distinctive touch. Among the names emblazoned on these simple carts, which are used as one-man-power delivery services, we saw the following: First Aid, John Gilbert, In God We Trust, Hopeful, Shirley Temple.

Kingston has a fairly large main business center of fine shops and department stores, banks, restaurants, and motion picture theatres. The patronage, naturally, is nearly all colored, and at first a white person feels just a bit conspicuous.

The whites have their own clubs where they spend a great deal of time over cocktails and bridge. The climate is too warm for very much in the way of strenuous sports, although riding, tennis, golf, cricket, and of course swimming, are enjoyed. It is interesting to watch the native youngsters throughout the island playing English cricket instead of American baseball. A lower humidity around Kingston than one finds usually in tropical ports makes exercise more endurable than might be expected.

Of the several places to visit about Kingston, undoubtedly the most interesting is Port Royal, out on the tip of land at the harbor entrance.



The market place at Blondeau, Haiti

Asleep in the market place





In the old ruins of Mercedes Church, Trujillo City

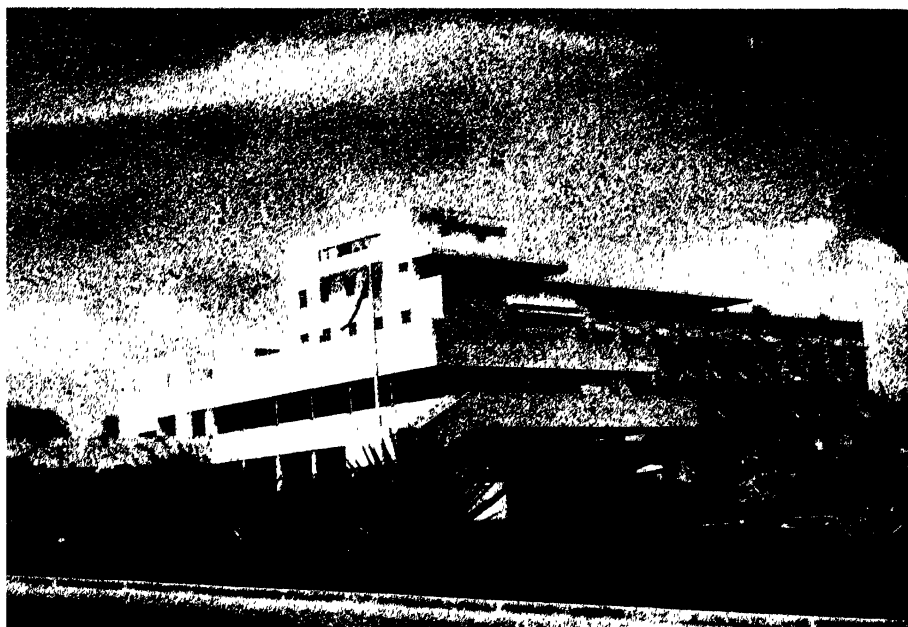


Ruins of San Francisco Monastery, Trujillo City



Ten-thousand-foot Trujillo Peak, highest point of the West Indies

The Jaragua, in Trujillo City, is one of the most luxurious hotels in the West Indies



It can be reached by automobile over the Palisadoes Drive circling the harbor from Kingston. It can't be done from the landward side as there is no waterfront drive. Many of the piers are reached by dead-end streets only. There are always a number of oceangoing craft in port, as well as smaller interisland boats. Most of the foreign trade of the island passes through this port. The chief products exported are bananas, sugar, rum, coffee, coconut products, grapefruit, logwood extract, ginger, and miscellaneous agricultural produce, roughly in that order of importance. The imported foods and manufactured products can be shipped from Kingston to all parts of the island by a fine interconnecting system of railways and highways, as we soon learned in our travels through the interior.

As we approached Port Royal by water it gave few evidences of its palmy days when it was the richest and wickedest city in the West Indies, the port to which the swashbuckling pirates of the seventeenth century brought their ill-gotten treasures. Today it is but a peaceful colony of natives living in a painted Lilliputian village, engaged in fishing or occupied in the nearby government barracks and coaling station. But there are reminders of its glorious and infamous past. There in Fort Charles with its rusting cannon and crumbling stone ramparts, is the elevated platform called Nelson's Quarterdeck. Here Lord Nelson once paced, watching nervously for the appearance of the French fleet, the fleet which dragged England's New World prestige to its all-time low.

It was the buccaneers of the century before Nelson who had torn at the flanks of the Spanish Main like a pack of wolves, and enabled the British to take over Jamaica with little effort. One of the English leaders in that century was William Penn, whose radical son later established his Holy Experiment in what was called Penn's Woods—or Pennsylvania.

But in the middle of the seventeenth century a great many of the English were engaged in less holy experiments of robbery on the high seas under the Jolly Roger. It was to Port Royal that they brought their treasures and spent them in riotous living. One of their number, Henry Morgan, later reformed and was knighted and made governor of Jamaica. He is said to have made gifts of some of his more valuable treasures to

the church. Today visitors who attain the status of special guests by a contribution are shown the famous Morgan silver in the Church of St. Peter in Port Royal. There are two silver plates, a communion chalice, and—most interesting of all—the huge silver flagon from which Morgan himself is said to have drunk. Worked into the bottom of the handle of the massive silver drinking mug is a whistle which the thirsty pirate is supposed to have blown to call for a refill of two quarts of wormwood wine.

There are many more stories about Port Royal, with more or less tangible evidence of the past. There is a plaque commemorating the deliverance of Lewis Galdy from death by earthquake. A first shock is supposed to have swallowed him up, along with thousands of others. But Galdy was thrown from the engulfing waters by a secondary quake and lived to a ripe old age. However, with the nearly total destruction of old Port Royal by earthquake in 1692 the place passed into oblivion and Kingston, inside the harbor, took its place as the chief city and port of the island.

But there is much more to Jamaica than Kingston. In fact Kingston is but the entrance to a veritable fairyland of beautiful mountain scenery, rushing streams and waterfalls, luxurious tropical greenery and the wonderful beaches and resorts of the north coast. The name of the island itself comes from the Indian word *Xayamaca* or Island of Many Waters. A hundred and forty miles long and forty-nine miles wide, it contains some of the highest mountains of the West Indies. Among these is Blue Mountain, 7,360 feet high.

Jamaica has more good roads for its area than any other West Indies island. There are four thousand miles of them, and as a goodly percentage are paved, it is easy to visit practically every part of the island by motor car. We set out to circle and cross it in a couple of directions as we hoped to do in the case of every island. We made the conventional trip out of Kingston to the famous Castleton Gardens deep in the mountains of the north, not far from Annotto Bay. The Castleton Botanical Gardens are high in the list of the island's attractions. Here have been assembled a great variety of shrubs, trees, and palms from all over the

world. Beautiful as the gardens are, the ride up Wag River to them is equally interesting. The luxurious tropical foliage all along the way makes it like traveling through a great open-air greenhouse along miles of winding road. Much nearer to Kingston are the more formal Hope Gardens with a greater display of flowering plants and shrubs. Included in this is an orchid house full of rare and beautiful orchids indigenous to the island.

Our first tour by motor round about Jamaica led us across the island diagonally, over an excellently paved road from Kingston to Ocho Rios on the north coast. The first fourteen miles of the drive, to Spanish Town, is across level plain country which characterizes the south coast for several miles inland. This is the driest part of Jamaica, and some of the crops are irrigated here. There are fields of sugar cane and plantations of bananas and coconut palms as well as grazing land, dotted with the light Brahman cattle that have been introduced all over the tropics. In places the highway is delightfully shaded by gigantic silk cotton trees which overhang the road. One of these trees along the way is said to be the largest tree on the island. It bears a plaque stating that in its shade Michael Scott wrote *Tom Cringle's Log*, a travel story of the West Indies during the eighteenth century.

More interesting than the scenery and the plant growth are the people. Never for any distance, except in the deepest mountains, were we ever out of sight of crowds of natives. Commonest were groups of women carrying baskets of produce on their heads. Others were mounted on diminutive donkeys, sitting cross-legged between huge hampers of goods that swayed rhythmically on either side. The typical marketbound lady of color is distinctive, vivid, amusing, interesting. You catch the gleam of her bright red bandanna far down the road, rivaling the roadside flowers. She is a queenly figure, perched atop her overladen donkey with the dignity of an Eastern potentate on an elephant. Her two huge market baskets jouncing along on either side of the little beast form a broader platform, comparatively, than the *howdah* of a royal elephant. She is an insouciant and carefree figure, puffing away on a pipe—a commanding figure, as she reaches down a bare foot to rap the beast sharply on the

ribs and turn him to the side of the road. She is the color, the humor, the free spirit, of black Jamaica.

After our considerable experience with Latin America, we missed seeing babies packed on mothers' backs. We asked about this and were told that it was the custom of the country to leave small children at home with older children or with other members of the family. And when they are left at home they are very much left at home; really small youngsters are seldom seen much outside the house.

We encountered also many two- and four-wheeled carts, the latter usually drawn by three donkeys hitched abreast. They are so arranged that one side position can be filled by a young donkey just being broken in. Unlike Cuba, there are few oxen in the country. Most of the land is too hilly for using oxen effectively. The natives turn up the soil on their little hillside farms by hand.

Our first stop on the way to the north coast, Spanish Town, was called Santiago de la Vega by the Spaniards in the days when Jamaica was in their possession. Referring to it as Spanish Town is an English habit, although the old mileposts are still marked SANTIAGO DE LA VEGA. It is a quaint little town of narrow, twisting streets, of lacy wooden decorations reminding one of patterns children cut from folded paper. There is very little of what one could call Spanish influence remaining, for it has been English since 1655. The cathedral is one of the oldest in the Western hemisphere. On one side of the central plaza is the attractive Rodney Memorial commemorating the defeat of the French fleet by the British navy in 1782, a defeat which saved the British empire in the West Indies. The monument is decorated with cannons from the French flagship of the illustrious De Grasse, the same man who had hitherto played a decisive part against the British during the American Revolution.

From Spanish Town our highway led up the beautiful gorge of the Cobre River, one of Jamaica's largest. The well-paved road swings around the bends of the river in never-tiring curves, opening up new vistas at every turn and constantly climbing into higher and fresher country. There are neat little native huts of gleaming white along the

way, a few villages, and even a town of fair size now and then. One of these, Bog Walk, is a good example of British usage of Spanish names. The name is derived from the Spanish *Boca de Agua*.

The road climbs gradually into an upland valley until it begins the stupendous ascent of Diavolo Mountain. Vegetation becomes even more interesting and luxuriant at these higher altitudes. The peaks rob the moisture-laden winds of most of their rain before they get over the mountains to the Kingston side. Very much in evidence now are the distinctive breadfruit trees with their shiny cutout leaves and large green fruit. Oddly enough, this tree which is so successful here, like many of the trees and plants of economic importance to the island, is not indigenous. The introduction of the breadfruit will be best remembered from the story of the famous Captain Bligh. It was his first attempt to bring the plant from the East Indies across the Pacific that resulted in the historic mutiny on the *Bounty*. After that disastrous attempt, which nearly cost him his life, Captain Bligh made two more trips with young breadfruit seedlings before he finally got them to his West Indies destination. His second venture suffered shipwreck, but his third in 1793 was successful. Introduced as a cheap food for slave labor, today it helps to feed one of the densest populations in the world, two hundred and three people to the square mile. Although a dry and insipid starch food, it does serve well as a filler for more palatable foods such as their *ackee* and codfish. The *ackee* grows on a tree in brilliantly colored pods closely resembling peppers. When ripened they offer a beautiful display of black seeds and a soft white fruit which tastes, when cooked, very much like hard-boiled eggs. The dried codfish is imported, of course, as well as much of their other staple foods like rice, beans, and wheat. The two crops which help most to pay for these imported foods, bananas and sugar cane, are themselves not indigenous to Jamaica.

We climbed steadily up the Diavolo Mountain, past banana plants and breadfruit trees seemingly all growing wild and tangled with other vegetation, extensive panoramas of the valley thousands of feet below opening up before us. Then down the other side of the mountain we glided, with full use of brakes and gears, until we arrived in the com-

fortable valley in which the town of Montego Bay is situated. From here it is eighteen miles down to the sea. We passed through Fern Gully, which is a deeply cut road through a veritable tunnel of tropical foliage. Towering jungle giants brushed the clouds. Great tree ferns stood in their shade and blotted up the little sunlight that filtered through. Dense growths of broad-leaved Elephant Ears caught whatever dim daylight escaped the lacy fronds of the ferns. From the top of the tallest tree to the very earth, a greedy and riotous Nature let no light or space go to waste.

We had spent so much time on the way that although we had come only sixty miles from Kingston to the north coast, it was growing late. We put up at one of the luxury hotels of Jamaica, situated on the hillside and overlooking the palm-fringed shore four hundred feet below. It was a gem of a place. The owners had diverted a swift-flowing mountain stream into a series of canals and a large open air swimming pool. There was a landscaped terrace, below which the river dropped several hundred feet in a beautiful waterfall. Brilliantly lighted at night, the whole scene was from a land of fantasy. Flower-lined paths led around the various terraces and along the waters, and an arbor of cerise Bougainvillea shaded the long flight of stone steps that connected two terraces and their little hidden gardens and pools. Like many of the luxury hotels of the West Indies, each room had its own porch or balcony on which one could spend idle time, lounging, reading, or visiting with friends, fanned by cooling breezes from the sea. It is also quite the custom to have breakfast served on these little outdoor living rooms. Although owned by a Jamaican, the hotel was managed by a Swiss and copied the Swiss chalet type of service.

At night the promenades were lit up with colored lights and the falls and palms floodlighted, making the nighttime far too lovely to waste in sleep. Overhead gleam the stars in the clear brilliance for which they are especially famed in the tropics, seeming as close as the colored lights of the promenades. Small wonder that the hotel is much patronized by honeymooners.

The next morning we drove to the shore of Ocho Rios and began

the long tour of the north coast, right along the sea most of the way, to Montego Bay at the other end of the island. Ocho Rios is one of the largest towns of the north coast. Most of the towns here are little fishing villages or agricultural centers for the cane and coconut country, though some are purely resort spots. It is along this north coast that most of the fine bathing beaches of the island are found. And what an array of color in these seas! The waters seem to bear every shade and hue of blue and green from deep purple to azure, from emerald to aquamarine. Casting their slender shadows across the sands and out on the waters are those perfect complements of tropical beaches, the graceful coconut palms. Cool, crystal-clear streams flow swiftly down from the mountains everywhere, leaping toward the sea in beautiful rapids and cascades. One of these, at Dun's River, was such a photogenic delight that we spent a few hours there, striving for effects with the cameras. A little farther on, Roaring River tumbles down from the mountains in the largest of these north coast falls, affording a sublime picture as it is seen through tropical palms and banana plants.

A bit past the next seacoast town of St. Ann's Bay is Runaway Beach, so named because here the last of the Spaniards escaped from the island under British attack in 1657. But a few miles farther on is the spot where white men first saw the Isle of Many Waters, for it was here on May 4, 1494, that Columbus first landed. His other visit to Jamaica farther east was under less auspicious circumstances. Nine years later, when in his waning glory, Columbus had been forbidden to touch the isle of Hispaniola, seat of Spanish power in the New World, ruled by a governor who was his jealous rival. Forced to seek refuge from a tempest on this voyage, Columbus beached his two ships on Jamaica and spent a full year of privation there before relief came. He sent a small open boat across the sea to Hispaniola or Santo Domingo, humbly asking his hated rival for help. The boat finally reached its destination but the jealous governor delayed sending assistance.

Meanwhile Columbus' band was menaced by starvation as the Arawaks became increasingly reluctant to furnish food. Fortunately, Columbus knew when the next eclipse of the moon was due, and threatened to

hide the moon forever if the Indians didn't continue to furnish food. No sooner was this danger averted than mutiny broke out among the sailors, but this was put down by Columbus' brother, who executed the ring-leaders.

Along the coast here are a series of remarkable limestone caves, some of them right by the road. They are perfectly dry and easy to explore, for they are lit by sunlight streaming down through natural chimneys in the roof. Down some of these openings hang huge streamers of vines from the earth above, giving the place an eerie air in the half-light. Bats winging about the caves add to the spookiness of the place. These caves would make a comfortable place to live, quite protected from the elements, and it was easy to conjure up a picture of pirates vacationing here in earlier days. We scuffled around in a few dry dark corners but found no pieces of eight, nor even a single doubloon.

It is interesting to speculate on the formation of these caves. Although bone-dry today, their smooth, water-worn walls give evidence that they were not always so. The geologist's explanation of the formation of the entire island is most interesting. It is believed that in an early period Jamaica was part of a solid land formation extending from Central America and cutting off what is now the Gulf of Mexico from the Caribbean Sea. At a later period most of this land was submerged and a limestone deposit covered the whole area but for a few peaks of Blue Mountain. Then the land rose again, leaving practically the whole island covered with a heavy deposit of limestone. When eroded into soil this provided ideal, well-drained soil conditions of extreme fertility. The many springs and caves of the island are also explained by this limestone formation, whose widespread dispersal is most strikingly evident from the air as one notes the frequency of neat white dots on the dark green land—white dots with black shadows of centers, much like the work of hot springs.

An interesting part of Jamaica that can best be seen from the air is the wild, broken, inaccessible section called the Cockpit Country, inland from the north coast at this point of our journey. One highway runs close to it, but to penetrate deeply into it one must travel by pack animal. Aside from the wild desolation of the place, it is famous for harboring

a people who in former days were as wild as the country itself. They are the Maroons, a name which comes from a Spanish term for "wild ones." They are descendants of African slaves who escaped from the Spanish plantations at the time the English took over, mixed with some of the original Arawak Indian blood. In later years they were joined by other escaped slaves and outlaws. They lived apart from the rest of the inhabitants of the country, deep in the most inaccessible retreats. They set up a hereditary ruler and entered into agreement on a common set of laws for themselves. But from time to time they raided peaceful settlements and became such a nuisance that in 1795 the British decided they would have to be liquidated. The ensuing war cost millions and resulted in the death or capture of many of the Maroons. Most of those captured were deported to Nova Scotia. A treaty was finally made with the remainder, giving them the right to rule themselves as a foreign tribe if they remained peaceful and kept within the confines of their own isolated Cockpit Country. They have lived harmoniously ever since, governed to this day by their own hereditary leader and their own laws.

Montego Bay is the principal beach resort of Jamaica. Here Nature has been most bountiful in supplying attractive white beaches within the protected waters of a beautiful blue bay surrounded by a verdant backdrop of jungle-clad hills. Although this old port town is as busy a place as is to be found on the north coast, it still has a quaint and quiet British Jamaican air. The natives go about their usual business of coming to town with great loads of goods on their heads, or astride their mouse-colored little donkeys. They gather in crowds in the market and engage in their noisy trading, entirely oblivious to the modern luxury hotels scattered along the beach, wherein dwell people from another world. Shiny black youngsters scamper about among the market goods, little boys usually *au naturel*.

The hotels of this beach are more or less self-contained units, generally each with its own private beach and set apart from the community, and hence all run on the American plan. There are also quaint little English guest houses, so one can readily find a mode of living to fit any pocketbook. The hotel at which we stayed was built overhanging the

water's edge. Two floors of promenade gave much the effect of being on an ocean liner, overlooking nothing but water on the Caribbean side. Even the dining room was built right over the water, and we were soothed by soft breezes while dining. Each room had its own little porch overhanging the sea.

Sports of all kinds are available in Montego Bay. There is a country club, and there is even alligator shooting in the swamps and rivers on the south side of the island's point, only thirty miles from the bay.

In Spanish times large numbers of wild pigs, gone astray from domestic herds, roamed the hills here and were hunted for their lard, called *manteca* in Spanish. The place then was called Manteca Bay, and its present name is an English corruption of the original. Except for such corrupted place names, few traces of Spanish occupation remain. The old fort near Montego Bay is English, not Spanish. Even the wild pigs are gone. Apparently there were no wild animals of size on the island even in Columbus' time, for he provisioned the boat which he sent to Haiti when he was shipwrecked with the meat of the coney, which still survives in remote parts of the island. It is a rodent on the order of a guinea pig but much larger, very dark brown or nearly black in color, weighing eight to ten pounds.

We were surprised to learn how little wild life is to be found in all the luxurious tropical fastnesses of Jamaica. Like Cuba, it is even devoid of birds of brilliant plumage, such as the parrot and macaw which one sees in abundance on the tropical mainland of Central and South America. Of course, the extermination of many species of wild life through the centuries is natural on densely populated islands like these with no source of replenishment from the mainland. Fortunately this applies to reptiles too. There are no poisonous snakes on the island.

Reluctantly we left the north shore of Jamaica and started on the long drive back toward Kingston, over a route that was to carry us diagonally over the whole interior of the island. Our paved highway wound up into the hills overlooking Montego Bay, of which we could catch glimpses framed by rain forest vegetation as we looked back from time to time. At several thousand feet we entered onto a rolling upland

plateau with less dense vegetation. In fact, the open farming and grazing land with stone fences might be said, but for an occasional palm tree, to resemble our New England landscape. But as soon as the road began climbing into higher country which caught the moisture-laden winds from the north, the vegetation changed immediately to dense tropical rain forests, giant *ceibas*, as well as breadfruit and other tropical trees, much of it covered with vines and parasitic plants, with palms and bananas mixed in here and there.

The road was not always paved as we headed deeper and higher into the hill country, but it was at worst a stone-surfaced roadway carefully graded and drained. Other equally good roads branched off or joined it from time to time. We passed towns and villages, quaint collections of varicolored frame or plain white stucco buildings. Tiny native huts with thatched roofs and walls of gleaming white nestled here and there in hollows, clung to hillsides, or jutted out on promontories, with small plots of cultivated land about them. At Montpelier we passed acres of neatly arranged khaki tents arranged in groups in some open fields. It was the annual cantonment and jamboree of the Boy Scouts of Jamaica. We had passed them before in the streets of Montego Bay, solid ranks of troop after troop marching behind their standards to the music of an excellent band. For blocks and blocks we had passed them, practically all black, alert and intelligent, neatly uniformed, Jamaica's future swinging along with perfect cadence of swinging arms and marching feet.

At Lacovia we passed through the famous Bamboo Grove where for more than a mile the tall bamboo shoots arched over the road, making us feel like pygmies lost in that giant grass, its graceful tips fingering and filtering the sunlight fifty feet above us. Rushing along we felt as an insect must feel scurrying past the grass roots in a meadow. We left this to climb to the high mountain valley in which the resort town of Mandeville is located, climbing to above two thousand feet in a series of steep ascents that offered increasingly broader panoramas, until finally at the summit the whole south coast lay stretched out into the hazy distance before us. By the time we reached Mandeville, our goal, we were punch drunk on scenery.

Mandeville, oldest of mountain resort towns, is a bit of rural old England nestling in the Jamaican hills. It is a peaceful, green country town, fresh and cool at a bit over two thousand feet elevation. The people live in scattered houses all across the valley, with acres of green about each place. Even the business section is scattered.

Lunch had been arranged for us beforehand by the Tourist Board at Kingston, as they had arranged our whole trip so far. The meal, like all our meals along the way, was of the finest food, and was served on a wide verandah overlooking the countryside from the high vantage point on which the inn was set. We visited the exclusive Manchester Club, practiced a little golf on their fine course under the guidance of one of the members, and then, after some hours of driving about to look over the other hotels, we started back for Kingston. This day's trip was of nearly two hundred miles, which is a long drive on an island less than one hundred and fifty miles long.

The road descended gradually from the mountainous interior to the more level country of the south coast, bringing us back into more settled country. Native huts were commoner, and we met an increasing number of people along the road, a constant stream of dark humanity. The setting sun, gilding the sky, painting Kingston in roseate colors and lighting up the faces of the dark and happy throng along the streets, was fitting finale to a most delightful island. Gladys envied me the ready convenience of color film in catching and preserving our memories of this happy isle, as we had hurried through it so that she had had little time for sketching.

CHAPTER VII

Port au Prince

Haiti is shaped like the head of a monster with open jaws, the Gulf of Gonave being the open mouth, with the northern and southern peninsulas the jaws themselves. The monster's head seems in the act of swallowing the large island of Gonave in the center of the gulf. Port au Prince, the capital, is located at the apex of the gulf between the huge jaws.

We were flying straight into the monstrous mouth toward Port au Prince. Looming out of the mist on our left, the first Haitian land we saw on our flight from Cuba was the inner jaw of the northern peninsula. We were over the tranquil waters of the Gulf of Gonave, the low-lying island of the same name on our right. Here and there tiny white triangles below us, which we recognized as the sails of little native craft, dotted the rippling blue of the gulf.

The jaws of land on both sides closed in very rapidly now, and we could distinguish details of the high blue-green mountains rising up from the coast on either side. An occasional white-walled village along the shore line flitted by like giant gleaming teeth as we seemed to be drawn irresistibly into the jaws of the monster. Then dead ahead loomed up the sloping streets of Port au Prince. Without being able to see straight ahead, it seemed as if we were zooming directly toward the city's buildings, with no alternative but to crash into the steeply sloping mountains that crowded the city itself down to the water's edge. We were low and I had barely time to get one photographic shot of the harbor and the white capitol building in the middle of the city, before it was all over and we were skimming the asphalt runway of the airport. Few cities

have their airports so close to town, but for Port au Prince to have one at a more conventional distance, it would have to be a vertical airport scraped out from the mountains' sides.

Even at the airport we were impressed with something distinctly different from other Latin American countries. There was the language of course first; Haiti is the only French-speaking country in Latin America. It was a modern French that was spoken by our first contacts, educated officials, quite different from the mellifluous Creole French of the masses which we were to hear later. Yet it seemed spoken with a tinge of gracious mannerisms lifted from the courtly customs of Louis XIV. The immigration officials practically apologized for the necessity of examining our passports, and the customs officials did apologize profusely for disturbing our luggage. The beautiful and efficient mulatto miss who piloted us through the officials and helped us with interpretation abandoned her other duties at one point and went immediately to telephone the American Consulate in our behalf to inquire for our mail. All this courteous treatment was extended wholly without any official knowledge of the purpose of our visit. After they had learned what we were there for, we were treated with almost bewildering deference. They summoned a Mr. Cyril Cator, who had been the head of the government's tourist department but who was at the time without official status because of an interim government. He was a polished colored gentleman of fine physique, a former Olympic champion broad jumper, now in the restaurant business in Port au Prince. He graciously offered to take us in his own car to the Splendid Hotel, as we had letters of introduction to Madame Franckel, the owner.

The Hotel Splendid, like the other major hotels in the capital, was not in the center of the city at all but was located out in the residential part of the town. In fact, the original part of the building had been the luxurious home of Mme. Franckel herself, and there additional floors and annexes had been added. The central part of the main floor, including several reception rooms, still retained the decorations and many of the furnishings of the time when it was the luxury home of a Haitian. The residence of a wealthy nineteenth-century Parisian could have boasted

nothing finer than the gracefully carved and beautifully gilded furniture, the long windows and the draperies on the paneled walls, the ceilings in gilt and polychrome, and the large gilt mirrors.

Our own room in the new annex to the hotel, however, in which we virtually lived during our stay in the city, was more modernly furnished. It overlooked the beautiful walled gardens of the hotel, gardens shaded by palm and pine, and rampant with vivid tropical flowers.

The thing that impressed us most was that, although we wrote and read by day in the open-air balcony and slept at night wholly without protection, never were we molested by a single fly or mosquito. Always the soft tropical breezes were allowed to play around us. Life in the open in the tropics can be pleasant indeed under sanitary conditions, untroubled by insect pests of any kind.

There seems to be a great deal of misconception about pests in the tropics. Mosquitoes are much more of a nuisance in the spring and summer in temperate and colder climates than they are down there. Mosquitoes even in the far north come on in great swarms. In most of the tropics mosquitoes are smaller and not nearly so plentiful. True, in the tropics you have them all the year round, and some species carry malaria and yellow fever. But in clean surroundings and more particularly at some distance above the ground where air can circulate freely, one need not be bothered by mosquitoes or flies either day or night.

To the uninitiated, perhaps the little lizards scurrying around in the hotel and invading one's bedroom may give rise to another fear. Actually, these are man's best friends. Motionless as a leaf on the wall on which they are resting, they lie patiently in wait for long periods for any stray fly or other insect that ventures in reach. Their lightning-like tongues make quick work of them, and the agility with which these little lizards can leap on their prey is most interesting to watch. In Haiti as well as in most of the other islands that we have visited, there are no really dangerous reptiles, animals, or insects.

The residential architecture of Port au Prince varies greatly. The more pretentious homes are ornate little castles, so highly decorated, and built up in tiers with white or pastel layer upon layer to such an extent

that we often referred to them as fancy wedding cakes. Everywhere there is a profusion of overhanging balconies, of grilled windows, of wood and stucco gingerbread. Much of the decoration on wood is of filagree fineness, and definitely gives Port au Prince architecture a distinctive flavor. The black lace shadows that they cast on the pastel-hued walls in the night when the street lights are on are all something out of this world. By day the infinite variety of floral and geometric design of the woodwork, carried out even in such simple, utilitarian things as cornices and eaves, is a never-ending source of amazement.

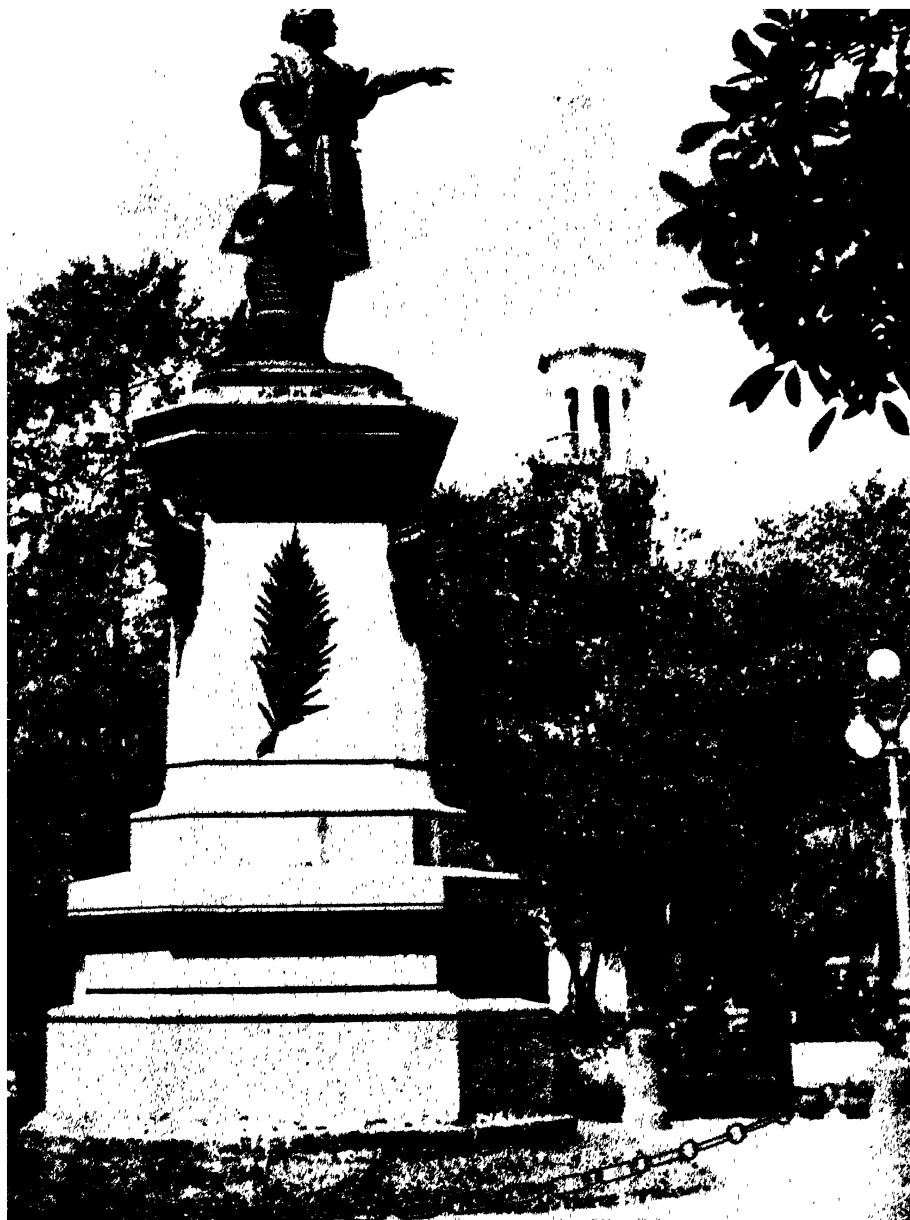
In comparison with the Spanish architecture of other lands, the private homes of Port au Prince are built up in the air instead of spread out upon the ground; the balcony supplants the patio to a great extent; and like the American the Frenchman prefers to put his decorations on the outside where others can see it.

Among the many friends we made in Port au Prince was the young manager of the Pan American Airways office there, Roger Jarman, and his charming wife. Though young, Jarman was an old-timer in these parts, and he was able to handle the French *patois* fluently, which helped us a great deal. During the war he had served the company in French Guiana, where he had taken his bride. Now they and their little son, Mike, were living quite comfortably in a furnished home in Port au Prince with the usual coterie of servants. Their home had all modern conveniences and was surrounded by a fine garden of flowers and shrubbery, with the whole thing costing them about half what a similar arrangement would cost in the United States. Servants' wages averaged six to eight dollars a month.

The Jarman took us on our first trip out of Port au Prince before our Willys arrived via native sailing craft from Cuba. It was on the popular fifteen mile drive up the steep mountain road to the resort town of Kenscoff. Here at 4200 feet above the sea we found ourselves in exceedingly cool climate, not only because of the altitude but because the spot is so open and swept by breezes from the sea. In fact, the sea can be seen through the intervening peaks. As the car climbs steadily over the steep road, palms change to pines and tropical plants to temperate crops



Roadside shrine to Virgin of Altagracia, patron saint of the Dominican Republic



Christopher Columbus before the Trujillo City cathedral where he is buried



Dominican miss on the highway near Las Matas



Haina Beach, near Trujillo City, is site of old Spanish fort

of grain, corn, and vegetables. The cultivated land is so steep that in places it has to be terraced.

Up here at Kenscoff many wealthy Haitians have summer homes. Some even, with businesses in the hot city, have their permanent homes here, commuting daily by automobile. Along the road, resplendent with crimson *flamboyan* trees in summer time, there is a picture at every one of its infinite twists and turns. Natives are constantly going to and fro on it, or are clustered about the water fountains along the way. All travel barefoot, although some of the more affluent carry their shoes hanging over their shoulders or slung over the donkey they ride to town. Arriving there, they put on their shoes and become aristocrats. They cannot afford to wear out this badge of well-being on the road. Besides, it would be too painful stumbling over the rough cobblestones with feet encased in torturous leather.

Halfway up to Kenscoff is Petionville, where, on week ends, several fashionable restaurants and hotels cater to the well-to-do of Port au Prince. Here, too, is the fashionable night spot, *Cabane Choucounne*, which is built in the style of an elaborate peasant's hut or *caille* with conical thatched roof. We attended a dance and evening affair given here on one occasion, a formal party given for a popular member of the American diplomatic set who was leaving the country. Though he was unable to be present himself, as he was detained by farewell parties in other parts, the affair was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Inside, the king-sized thatched hut was aglitter with electric lights. The whole center was an immense circular dance floor with tiers of raised platforms around it except for the spot where the orchestra's platform jutted out. The platforms held tables for refreshments.

It was a gay party. The smartly gowned women and impeccably dressed men could have done justice to the smartest New York night club. But what an international assemblage! There were French-speaking blacks and whites, Spanish-speaking blacks and whites, English-speaking Americans and British, German-speaking Austrians and Swiss. There were Dutch, Germans, and Scandinavians, not only of the diplomatic corps but permanent residents of the country.

And there was no color line here. Black, tuxedo-clad men danced with white-shouldered women. Beautiful mulatto women danced the fast Haitian *meringue*, Cuban rhumbas, and American fox trots with the most dignified of white gentlemen.

Two thousand feet higher still than Kenscoff in the mountains is the resort of Le Refuge, with a smart rustic inn patterned after the Swiss chalet. The trip is often made on foot by even the better class, for otherwise only a jeep or saddle animal can carry one to this cool point. Up here the chilly air is very exhilarating and there are even frosts at night. It is remarkable that such places as these are but a few hours out of sweltering Port au Prince.

From this cool vantage point let us review Haiti's muggy capital. It is, as a capital, in a class by itself. While there are some modern residential developments the business and administrative part of the town is the most ornate, the most run-down, the most distinctive, of West Indian capitals. You stumble under gloomy arcades over narrow cobblestone sidewalks worn more uneven by centuries of shuffling feet. The stores you pass are housed in massive buildings dating from colonial times. Great arched doors which open outward are folded back against the walls. At night, these same doors pull shut and hook with gigantic iron hooks, giving passersby an overwhelming sense of being left on the outside of things.

By day, Port au Prince's narrow streets are bustling with an endless, dusty procession of peasants, afoot or donkey-back. Now and then a street is scoured of traffic by a donkey laden down with huge straw panniers bursting with handicraft. As traffic eddies back in the wake of one of these, it may be pushed to the wall again by a mountainous black woman, a Mother Hubbard-clad mass of ebony, jouncing like Jello atop a spraddle-legged little donkey. As pedestrian traffic springs up again, it is thrown into a state of static and ecstatic turmoil by a trim young thing in white, swinging along in a short and low-cut dress, looking as if she had been pressed into it cold and allowed to expand in the heat to a seam-straining precision fit.

Port au Prince's traffic isn't wholly bucolic and barefoot. There are

buses, too, high yellow buses, top-heavy and crammed with humanity, and swaying perilously at every turn. There are taxis, identified by red flags and exhumed from the whole history of automotive transportation, each capably managed by a licensed maniac. Foot traffic and donkey-mounted traffic shuffle along as lackadaisically as if these folk were busy only with spending eternity here. Wheeled traffic rushes as madly as if Gabriel had just blown his trumpet and everyone had to hurry home to pack. Watch 'em! If buses miss you, remember that the more decrepit taxis can make a sharper turn in pursuit. If you are nimble enough to escape both, beware of slim young things in white frocks, straining at life and straining at the seams.

A curious feature of Port au Prince's foot traffic, particularly that part of it made up of country folk, is the preponderance of women. The reason for this goes back to more unsettled times, when any man might be seized by revolutionary leaders for service in the army and only women ventured forth. The habit stuck.

The stores of Port au Prince amuse and entertain for their range of stock. In one store you may buy flavorful Haitian rum by the case, American milk of magnesia by the bottle, a flagon of French perfume at a startlingly low figure, a pound of sausage of startlingly spicy flavor.

The general curio stores will be found interesting, too. There are bracelets made of coins buried in the late eighteenth century, when Haiti rebelled against its French masters, and recently unearthed by road-building crews. There are multicolored sisal bags, shoes and gay hats to wear at the beach, fine embroidery and lace. Best of all, though bulky, is the limitless variety of articles of polished mahogany, most beautiful of Haitian woods. These range from small figurines to custom-built coffee tables which will be made to your order for a song and are easily shipped home by air express.

The old section of Port au Prince, centering about the harbor, dates from the founding of the city in 1749. The Champ de Mars, the large public square where the gleaming white National Palace is located, was once at the city limits in the days when Port au Prince was the capital of the French colony of Saint Domingue. Here are located the more

important government buildings, the museum, and the leading theatres and restaurants. On the steep slope beyond Champ de Mars are the fine modern residences set into the mountain's living rock. From the numberless terraces of these homes you get a breath-taking view of the encircling hills, the deep blue harbor, and the old city buried in trees.

The Jarman family took us one Sunday to the American Club outside Port au Prince for dinner. After the usual social cocktail we all went for a refreshing dip in the swimming pool built on the terrace in front of the club.

I was thoroughly enjoying my swim when I began to feel, I thought, the effects of the cocktail or of the hot tropical sun. It seemed as if I were in a rocking boat. The water swished unnaturally high up and over the edges of the pool. Could it be possible that I was making such big waves through my unpolished swimming technique? Then it struck me that this must be caused by strong gusts of wind. Yet when I held onto the edge of the pool and raised myself up, there was no wind. The waves went on spilling over the edge of the pool. Instead of wind, there was an unnatural deathlike calm about the air. "My, but that cocktail carried an awful wallop!" I thought to myself. "Perhaps I had better get out of the water until the effect wears off."

As I was climbing out the others laughingly yelled something to me which I did not catch, but which I interpreted as a laugh at my silly appearance. I tried desperately to appear nonchalant. "Joke's on me," I thought. "They must have loaded that drink."

"Did you feel it?" someone asked.

So I would play the game with them. I shrugged. "Just a little bit," I confessed.

The group grew excited. Someone pointed to a chair. "There it is again! Look at it walk!" The chair was creeping about on the grass.

Now my cocktail theory began not to make sense. Not only did I see a chair going someplace all by itself, but *others* saw the same thing.

"That must be *really* a bad earthquake," someone said. At last the truth dawned on me. It wasn't the cocktail that was giving me the shaking up after all.

For seconds more we watched the lawn chairs creeping about and trembling. There was a hush in the air, but for the rhythmic splash of the waves as they traveled from end to end of the pool.

"Didn't you feel it in the water?" Jarman asked, turning to me.

"Yes. But I thought it was the cocktail."

This was greeted with a shout of laughter, in which I could now join, as we discussed the earthquake and how bad it might have been in other places.

That night the newspapers and radio informed us that we had just experienced, at a distance, one of the worst quakes of the Caribbean area in history. According to the seismographs, it had originated in the deepest part of the Atlantic off the coasts of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. Weeks later when we arrived in the Dominican Republic we had an opportunity to witness the damage done by the famed August 4th earthquake, when we saw whole towns destroyed. In fact, smaller quakes occurred from time to time during all the rest of our travels through these two countries on the island of Hispaniola.

Before our Willys arrived and forced us to get to work seriously at covering Haiti's highways, we ran into another fellow-countryman who was very hospitable and interesting. This was Frederick Lee, the writer, who was making work and fun of the project of living native style to gather material. Fred had acquired a piece of land on the outskirts of the village of Carrefour about a dozen miles down the coast from Port au Prince. With a household of two servants, a cook and a houseboy, and with hired labor on occasion as required, he was building himself a *caille* or home in comfortable native style. By the time we arrived Fred was already fairly comfortable in a two-room, grass-roofed cage with adobe walls, and was building a third room. In addition, he was draining the grounds about the place, landscaping, and fencing it. In his spare time he invited us out for a native dinner. We went early enough to watch the process from beginning to end.

We were impressed by the way the old colored woman who cooked for him prepared the full meal on an open fire simply by resting clay pots and a few manufactured utensils on stones around the fire. The

meal consisted of beans and rice, the *pièce de résistance* of every native meal, plus a meat stew, fried breadfruit, and *cassava* cakes for bread. Sweetened demi-tasses of coffee at the end were both beverage and dessert.

When we arrived, Fred was sitting at a table on the shady side of the house in abbreviated swimming trunks, drinking his morning coffee. The old cook was busily engaged in starting the stew for the midday meal, cutting chunks of meat into a clay pot which would be left to simmer for hours beside the fire. Various seasonings had been added, as well as pieces of tomato which seem to be considered essential to all meat dishes in these parts. From time to time she would pause to wash a soiled utensil by scrubbing it vigorously with cold water dipped from a large earthen storage jar kept just inside the house. A handful of coarse *maguay* fiber was used for scrubbing, instead of the dishcloth to which we are accustomed.

We watched the entire process of preparing the breadfruit—in fact, we even saw it being picked from one of the large breadfruit trees which shaded the premises. Breadfruit is a large, warty, green fruit which grows on a tree of considerable size. The fruit looks somewhat like the mock oranges found in the eastern United States. The interior is white and tasteless, and of a pulpy and rather dry texture. It is never eaten raw. When boiled it is vaguely similar to boiled potatoes but is less flavorful. When fried, especially if sliced thin, it is a fair substitute for fried potatoes. The tree grows almost anywhere in the tropics without any care whatever, and since there is no set ripening season for the fruit it furnishes a dependable food supply for almost any time of year.

It was fascinating to watch Lo, the colored cook, skillfully pare breadfruit with a huge butcher knife and slice the white pulp for frying. She moved along in her work with a graceless efficiency, now shoving the kidney beans closer to the fire, now preparing the rice, now pausing to clean an earthen pot that had served for cooking one item of the meal before she could go on, for there was no plethora of dishware. She scurried back and forth between the two open fires required for the

cooking, one out in the yard and the other under the roof of the open part of the *caille*.

Meanwhile Fred was unconsciously giving us a demonstration of the regal position he enjoyed in this household, showing us how much a white foreigner is respected even in a black republic. Having completed his coffee and shaved, he summoned the houseboy, Vitale, and motioned toward his own feet. Vitale understood and brought a large pan of water. He removed Fred's shoes and proceeded to wash his feet.

While all this was going on in and about the house, a workman was laying a stone walk from the door to the road in front. Another was engaged in weaving the walls of the outhouse which Fred referred to as his "Chic Sale." There was little reason to fear that these workers would shirk their jobs or do them poorly, for Vitale seemed to be everywhere at once, supervising and bossing everyone. He did more than this. If the mason laying the walk seemed about to run out of mortar, Vitale speedily set to work mixing another batch. Wherever work was going on, Vitale was there to boss and help.

Fred told us something of how Vitale had engaged himself as houseboy-manager, for definitely Vitale had done the engaging. He appeared one day from nowhere before Fred. "I see you have no houseboy. I shall be your houseboy," he said, in Creole French of course.

"I don't know you," Fred replied.

"You will. I am strong and able and can do many things."

"Where do you come from?" asked Fred.

"From across the mountains."

"But I do not need a houseboy. And I cannot pay." Fred turned and walked away.

But Vitale was not to be shaken off so lightly. Stepping in front of Fred, he folded his arms and began a long harangue about his many abilities and qualifications, his eyes fixed on the sky. To clinch this, he added, "You need not pay me anything, unless you want to. But I shall stay here and save you much from my people."

Without assenting or dissenting, Fred allowed Vitale to sleep in his *caille* and to eat what was left over from the meals. But gradually Vitale

made himself indispensable. He saved Fred money with his shrewd buying in the market. He did away with the expense of hiring labor for tinkering about the place, for Vitale himself was quite a handyman. He was the constant watchdog of Fred's property. He became not only his personal servant but overseer of the premises as well. When stone or lime or boards were bought, they cost half of what they had been costing. Recognizing his worth, Fred began to pay Vitale a dollar a month besides his keep. In gourdes, Haitian money, it looked more like wages than it sounds. And when his wages were raised to two dollars a month, Vitale's gratitude knew no bounds, with the result that he worked as hard as two or three ordinary servants and assumed the responsibility for the whole household. By his energy and knowledge, he dominated all the others. He had become majordomo of the house and hired and fired all the others but Lo, the cook.

Lo lived next door, and stayed there when her services were not required. She too received two dollars a month. Both she and Vitale furnished much of the food Fred ate at no cost from gardens they worked on the side, as well as products they received in exchange for garden surplus. The rice, *cassava*, bananas, as well as tomatoes for flavoring this dinner for us, as an example, were acquired in this way. The breadfruit had come free from Fred's trees. The only things he had bought for this luxurious repast were the beans, the meat, and the coffee. Fred said he was actually living on thirty-six cents a day, including entertaining guests with extra meals.

The meal was finally served on a table set out in the front yard under the shade of breadfruit and mango trees. We were fanned by refreshing breezes that blew across the open yard, while dinner music was furnished by the murmur of a tiny brook that rippled by only a few feet from our table. No pests of any kind disturbed our open air banquet. During the whole meal Vitale hovered about in the background, leaving for moments now and then to supervise other activities. After the meal, when Fred walked around to inspect things for himself, he was met everywhere with the statement, "Vitale was just here," which seemed to convey assurance that everything was therefore correct.

In the middle of the afternoon Fred invited me to take a stroll with him to what he referred to as his private shower bath. Through a neighboring cornfield we made our way to a grove of large mango trees. Through the center of this grove ran a fair-sized mountain stream of clear water. At one point it dashed in a waterfall down to a lower level, the falls and the little pool beneath it almost closed in by foliage. Here Fred stripped and waded out into the pool, allowing the waterfall to cascade over him in a natural, refreshing shower.

Later in the day he took us over to the village to see the "high life." This consisted of a unique bar built over a flowing brook to keep it cool, with a palm-thatched roof above the various tables out in the yard, and around the main bar. Music was supplied by an old phonograph and a radio. Girls ranging through all hues from high yellow to jet black sat around available for whatever service was desired of them. As it was still only late afternoon, business was slack and most of them were unengaged.

At the opposite end of the economic scale we made the acquaintance of another American who was living in a veritable palace of a home with a small army of native servants. Horace Ashton had formerly been employed as cultural relations official for the United States government in Haiti. Now retired from service but still possessing tremendous energy and vitality, he had established a boat-building business. With cheap but skillful Haitian labor he filled American orders for custom-built yachts and fishing boats of the finest material, at from half to two-thirds of what they would cost in the United States. Sportsmen came down to sail their own boats home, or at times Ashton delivered them under their own power.

Horace Ashton lived in one of the most palatial homes in Haiti. It was located off the main highway that climbed up the mountain back of Port au Prince, and overlooked the picturesque valley below. It had been built as a place of luxurious retirement by a wealthy American who had later found it necessary to return to the United States. Built of stone, stucco, and frame, it was a huge place for a residence, consisting of several floors and a basement, great terraces, overhanging balconies, and a

patio with an open air swimming pool. In addition to the original furniture, Ashton had filled the place with mementoes of his bizarre life in many parts of the world. Chinese screens, statues of Buddha, Mohammedan prayer books, African pottery and ceremonial gadgets, and many other items with especial emphasis on the religious and cultural life of Africa and the Far East, fought for room in what was a veritable religious museum.

Quite an authority on the religious cults of Africa and the Far East, Ashton had at various times done considerable research on the religious groups of the African Negro, attempting to trace the origins of present-day Haitian voodoo, and had had excellent opportunities in Africa to do this. Religion was of more than passing interest to him. He had even taken time out from a busy life to become for a time a neophyte monk in a lamasery in Tibet. We consider Ashton's word about as authoritative as any on the question of voodoo in Haiti. Moreover, what he had to say checks with leading authorities who have done scholarly research on the subject.

Today voodoo in Haiti is greatly overrated by many who go there and wish to return with something strange and spectacular. True, there have been in the past rare cases of human sacrifice, and today an occasional chicken or goat may end its days as a blood offering in a strange religious ceremony. But for the most part among the masses all that remains of the original African voodoo are vague superstitions, an occasional reference to the old gods, Papa-Lo and Mama-Lo (who are now often confused with Christian saints), and a love of rhythmic dancing to the music of Haitian drums.

It is the awesome sound of these so-called voodoo drums one hears in traveling all through the country that inspires so many casual travelers to believe that voodoo practices are constantly going on all about them. The drums carry so far, and their penetrating rhythm does make the shivers play up and down the spine! But the traveler who takes time to run down a voodoo drum will in all probability find the use of them rather prosaic.

We were thrilled by voodoo drums for the last few miles of our trip

up to Kenscott. The steady tom-tom beat worked its way even through the clatter of the Willys' tired old motor, seemed to seep in through our pores even more than it was heard through our ears. But at the very end of the trip the thin wail of a violin and the sturdy slapping of a bull fiddle came to us too—sounds that died away beyond a relatively narrow radius while the lugubrious beat of the drums wandered on and on for endless distances, seemingly carried on nerve impulses instead of air waves.

We came finally on the voodoo ceremony just short of Kenscott. It was a *bamboche*, a native dance, a social function that springs up everywhere in Haiti on slightest provocation. There was nothing more awe-inspiring in it than in any other aggregation of tired, happy colored folk anywhere, enjoying an ecstatic emotional jag, drunk on din and jollity. A *bomboche* springs into being on the occasion of a wedding, a birthday, a week end of fine weather, or the end of a hard job. It is about as awesome and as laden with religious portent as a country square dance would be at home, if the country square dance were taken over by Holy Rollers as a part of church ritual. In fact, the commonness of drums in Haiti may be founded more on economics than on religious frenzy. Haiti is poor. The masses are extremely poverty-stricken. It costs money for most musical instruments, but it costs only time to make a drum.

A common custom of planting time and harvest time adds even more to the ubiquitous quality of drumbeats. At these seasons a Haitian will call on his neighbors for aid, all pitching in to make a communal job and a communal party of what would otherwise be plain hard work. Barn raisings, housewarmings, and husking bees in our own land in earlier days were like this, and they too featured music. But their music was generally made of the thinner sounds of violin and guitar. Haitians, accepting a *coumbite* or invitation to join in work, generally gather together to march to the job, led by drummers who beat time along the way and speed the work tempo with a rhythmic background to the singing of a vocalist or *catalier* who entertains the group with lively songs and recitations of local events. The words, the very sound of the

voice, fade away in a few hundred yards. The drumbeats march up and down the valleys, rolling on and on, tampering with nerve-ends wherever they fall. Let them fall on the ear of a passing tourist who is listening to tales of voodoo worship, and the simple task of planting corn to music becomes proof positive that Haiti is a dark and fearsome place.

True there are native fakirs here and there who see in the superstitious nature of their own people an opportunity to exploit them by posing as voodoo priests or priestesses. Some of the more clever and skillful are taken seriously, and perform rites invoking the ancient African gods. They are dealers in symbolic designs drawn on the ground with symbolic cornmeal, specialists in ceremonial rooster sacrifices, and occasionally with the unconscious connivance of their own people seem to display supernatural powers. A woman dancer who has reached a point of ecstatic exhaustion suddenly grows calm at the touch of voodoo priest or priestess, and this is taken as proof of hidden power. But growing knowledge tends rapidly to lessen these practices and their effectiveness.

With all the flights of fancy masquerading as fact with which we had been regaled before the trip, Gladys and I traveled alone into the island's remotest corners and never had any occasion to fear the people. In fact I feel certain that, with all the respect shown there to a white person, a white woman can feel as safe traveling in Haiti as in any nation in our hemisphere. These Haitians are as friendly a people as we have ever met.

CHAPTER VIII

Haitian Heights and Highlights

"The time has come," the walrus said,

"To speak of many things;

Of ships"—and here we heartily got off and agreed with him. We had been talking about ships. About a ship. About a soggy old boat with a sacrilegious name, the *Vierge Immaculée*. "Only two days," the doughty captain had said, when we had intrusted the Willys to his care back in Cuba. Only two days! We had hurried through Jamaica so as not to let the Willys rust overlong on the dock. Only two days—and we had dawdled for several days about Port au Prince. Port au Prince was all in our cameras now, and it was time to be pushing on. But—no car! Not a sign of a car. Not a sign of the *Vierge Immaculée*! "*La Vierge Immaculée? Mais oui, m'soo, très bien* I'm known that sheep. Eet makes weeks that she has gone. *Mais non, m'soo, absolu'mah* she's don' arrive to thees port. She's vair' ol' boat; maybe she's seenk. *Très triste!*"

We paced the dock and strained our eyes looking out to sea. Would the grand amphibious tour of the Caribbean end up just a trip to Cuba after all? Could the *Vierge Immaculée's* rotting old bottom have gathered barnacles until they dragged her down? She was to have made the trip in a couple of days. Had her shiftless, lackadaisical crew carelessly sailed her to the bottom of the sea? She was to have been in over a week ago.

Painfully we counted over our shekels. Bitterly we weighed the horrible cost of buying another car in a car-starved market. Sadly we feared the *Vierge Immaculée* had carried the expedition to the bottom too. Days crept by. Hungrily we gnawed our nails to the bone and started slowly up toward our elbows. We called down anathema on the ghost

of a dirty old boat. We placed a curse on the sodden souls of such a careless crew.

Days more joined the timeless past and we were roaming the waterfront not hopefully but from force of habit. We had just gazed out to sea to add another little fillip to our curse when something caught my eyes—a tiny sail on the horizon about as big and clear as a flyspeck. “Our boat!” Gladys shouted.

“Nonsense! Don’t use your wishes for eyes. Our boat’s done for.”

“But it’s a sail!”

I peered out and tried hard to believe it too. “Sure. It’s a sail. Anybody could use a sail. There are lots of boats with sails—in these waters. If that soggy old tub still had a sail above the water, by now she’d have sailed to—.”

To use another nautical term, there was a spanking breeze blowing. It was blowing dead ashore. It was moving the soiled rag down from the horizon at a fair number of knots, for a sailboat. We both paced up and down and spent minutes in gentle bickering, minutes that ran around 3600 seconds to the minute. The shaded blob under the dirty sail began slowly to take shape. It still wasn’t much of an identifiable shape, but that in itself was a characteristic of the *Vierge Immaculée*. Slowly, in hopes that Gladys wouldn’t notice me in the act, I began to shut up. I still knew it was impossible for a ship to come back from a watery grave, especially such a ship as that. I still knew it was impossible for such a ship to have spent so long a time on such a little journey. Still, now that the blob on the waters was growing plainer, there was something about it—something familiar in the soggy sauciness with which it rolled along. Maybe—Nonsense!

I gave up and believed in miracles when at long last we could make out the rounded dome of our Willys between the masts. Sure enough, it was the good old *Vierge Immaculée*. Sturdy little tub! Wooden ships and iron men and all that. Only—where in blazes had she been hiding all this time in such a narrow sea? Anyway, home were the sailors and all was forgiven.

We were aboard before the *Vierge Immaculée* had scraped her bar-

nacle-encrusted rump against the pier, both of us boiling with delight and questions. Where? What? Why? How? The crew of iron men, listless enough when last we had seen them, were more listless now. Moreover, they seemed leaner. They were listless even for answering questions, but alert in a question of their own. "When do we eat?" Somewhere in that short water gap which separates Cuba and Haiti and which seems so infinitesimal on the map, the *Vierge Immaculée* had been becalmed.

With the Willys once again in hand we were ready shortly to set about the business of looking over Haiti's highways. But this was a task more easily set than done. Haiti was seriously lacking in roads, and such roads as were there were most grievously lacking in quality. In fact it might be said that this black republic is seriously lacking in many things. Upon our arrival, though we were too worried to notice it at the time, Haiti was even lacking a president. Revolution had just unseated the incumbent or pried him loose, though our fears for the loss of the car overshadowed this for the time. It was, after all, more or less a private matter and of no moment to us, as well as being more than slightly beyond our comprehension. Haitian politics is slightly faster and more lethal than ice hockey, and it is difficult even for Haitians to keep up on the rules and follow the plays. To us outsiders it was comforting to know that we couldn't understand it even if we knew all about it.

We had a passing contact with this lively sport, however, just before we took off from Port au Prince. We were only nosing about the town, taking it easy and trying to get the salt water worked out of the Willys' lungs, when we came down a street which was rather well blocked by what seemed to be an angry mob. Up to this time we hadn't done anything in Haiti except to worry, so we couldn't believe anybody was mad at us. We nosed the car up close to the edge of the demonstrators, and I unlimbered the movie camera. The air was thick with imprecations, none of which had been adequately covered in schoolbook French, and here and there a few rocks were occasionally swirling by in it, giving it a certain amount of body.

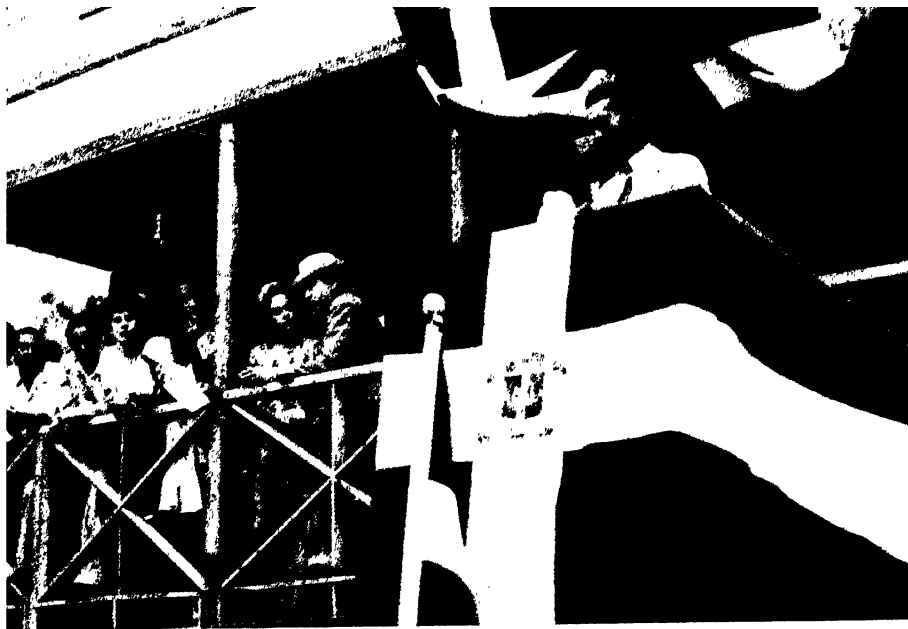
Then things changed suddenly, and the mob, which had been only in a state of turbulent animation, suddenly turned all in our direction.

This was puzzling. I got back in the car and was starting to back around when before us I saw the reason for the sudden purposefulness of the people in the street. A trim body of *garde d'Haiti* was swinging down the street. Hot dog! There we were, right in the front lines of a Caribbean revolution; or if we weren't we might never know the difference, because neither of us understand French and especially that French. It looked like a lively spot for a few feet of action films, with a very good excuse for taking them as we were caught in the middle and couldn't go anywhere else at the moment anyway. But the *garde d'Haiti* didn't seem to understand the importance of the occasion or the excellent photographic opportunities it might present. A few tear gas bombs were launched into and in front of the mob, and under this impetus it speedily melted away while we speedily melted into tears. This disconcerted my camera work considerably, and the few pungent whiffs we got don't show in the film at all, not even in Kodachrome.

That was enough of Port au Prince. We still had Haiti's highways to cover, and from what information we could pick up it seemed that they might take a lot of covering. In fact, in some quarters we were led to believe that they might even take a lot of finding. So we wound up the motor and took off.

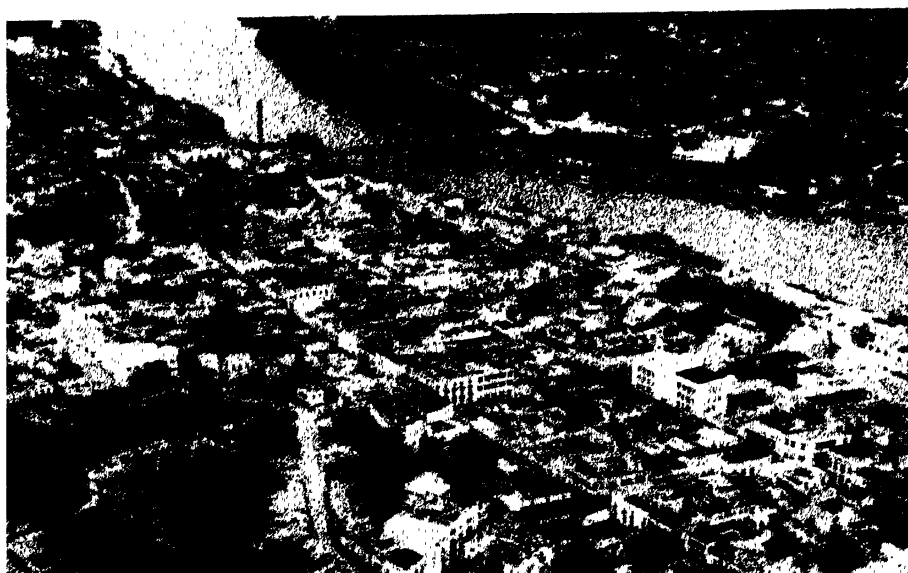
It is sixty-one miles overland across the backbone of mountain range on the southern peninsula—the Haitian monster's lower jaw—by highway to Jacmel. But there is no highway. It had been washed out by a flood soon after being built. The present route ascends the bed of a mountain stream to the pass at Trouin and descends the bed of the Gouche River to the sea at Jacmel. It is considered a dangerous road because of the narrow valley of Gouche River, which rises very rapidly when afternoon rains fall on its tributaries in the mountains. Automobiles caught here when the waters rise rapidly have to be abandoned while occupants climb for their lives into the hills.

This trip was too risky for Gladys to undertake with me. Fortunately I had made the acquaintance of an ideal companion who not only knew the road but could speak the Creole language of the natives to whom we would have to appeal for help in an emergency. This was Charley Bar-



There are many political meetings in the Dominican Republic but always of the same party

Trujillo City by air, showing central city and port





Santo Domingo Cathedral, Trujillo City



The church jewels of Santo Domingo Cathedral

Cutting the sugar cane, chief money crop of most of the West Indies





Earthquake-ruined Church of San Francisco, Dominican Republic

reyre, French owner of a garage in Port au Prince. Charley had spent many years in the U. S. and spoke English like an American and French like a Parisian or like a Creole as occasion demanded.

Our plan was to make the entire trip and return in one day, starting back before the river would rise with the afternoon rains. So we left before five o'clock in the morning with a supply of sandwiches and fruit, vacuum bottles of ice-cold lemonade prepared by the hotel, and a bottle of French cognac which Charley said, "might come in handy. Our route took us west along the gulf from Port au Prince over the only twelve miles of asphalt on the trip, to Carrefour. At the end of this pavement the road was well graded and stone surfaced until we turned off to ascend the pass, for it is the main highway to various places in the southern peninsula of the country. Even this early in the morning the highway was crowded with people walking and on donkey-back. The cool of the early morning is the favorite time for the people in the country to do their work or travel long distances on foot. In fact they can be found traveling along these roads at any hour of the night.

Passing rapidly through several villages and the town of Leogane and past countryside of flooded rice fields, bananas, sweet potatoes, *yuca*, *cassava*, and corn we finally arrived at the point where we turned off the coast road and into the mountains. Our route looked anything but promising and without a guide one would never have guessed it was the road to the south coast. We followed some car tracks through the brush and through the water of a nice clear stream and started up the valley alongside it. At places there were evidences of some roadwork, while at others the pebbly bed of the stream was simply packed down with the weight of vehicles using the route.

Our route climbed steadily up a very beautiful valley as the mountains loomed up ahead of us. The water we were following was cool and clear from mountain springs, and it felt very refreshing to splash through it from time to time with our car. Stands of bananas crowded in on both sides of us. It became ever greener as we ascended. Here and there the valley opened wider, where tributaries joined the main stream we were following. We could see out and distinguish little white adobe

huts of the natives, each with the small individual clearing of cultivated land. As we got higher the air became fresher and the crops became those of a more temperate climate. We now passed fields of beans, peas, beets, carrots, and other familiar crops started by the natives under the U. S. foreign economic projects as a means of helping Haitians increase food production during the late war. Finally leaving the stream behind we climbed steeply for a short distance over a pass and there opening up below us was a wide, lush, tropical valley with the village of Trouin down the road ahead of us, a little Shangri-La tucked away here in the mountains.

Alongside the road on top of the pass we drove by a group of Haitian prisoners who were at work building a new masonry barracks for the national guard. The customary striped prisoner uniforms were made of American blue and white bed ticking. The little white-washed village of Trouin was complete with post-office, office of justice of peace, and tax office of adobe and thatched roof. An incompleated masonry church large enough for a village many times the size of this overlooked the whole valley from high above the road. Its gaping apertures had waited many years for the necessary increase in population with the resultant revenue for completion. But the building had a roof and could afford to stand thus and wait.

From the little village of Trouin our route started the winding descent of eighteen miles through the Gouche River valley. At first our view was delightfully open but as we dropped in altitude the mountains loomed up more steeply around us and the valley grew more constricted. We were now driving over the pebbly bed of a much larger river, at times driving through running water. But it was not deep. Most of the time we were crossing and recrossing the stream of clear water in shallow fords to follow whatever side offered us most space for driving between the mountain wall and the river itself. Infrequently the road climbed the steep sides to follow the route of the old road which had been destroyed by the flood. Here and there we came to parts of an abandoned bridge left standing by the flood. Sometimes evidences of the old road ended abruptly higher up as if it had crossed the river over a

high bridge but no single evidence of the bridge itself remained. We shuddered to think what would happen to us if we were caught in this valley with flood waters bearing down on us. We had been told that the river could rise to flood stage in an hour, and I well knew the truth of this for I had experienced these tropical downpours before. Often the rains in this part of the tropics are veritable cloudbursts. The water pours down in such solid sheets that even walking through one of these rains requires physical effort.

But we couldn't worry about that very seriously just now, for overhead the sun shone brilliantly, the birds sang merrily, and the shallow waters at our feet were a delight indeed. We enjoyed the refreshing drive down the Gouche valley, stopping now and then to admire the scenery and to register it on film.

From the upper reaches of the valley and before it closed in we were constantly passing groups of natives carrying great bundles of leaves on their heads and on donkey back. We stopped to inquire and found out they were leaves of the sour orange and that they were to be sold to a man engaged in distilling them for the essential oil. This distillery was along the road ahead and we stopped to look it over. It consisted of a number of large copper stills in which a wagonload of the leaves could be dumped and treated at a time. The owner explained that the resulting oil was used as a basis for making perfumes and sold for several hundred dollars a gallon. The plant had been established by his father who had brought knowledge of the business from France. A number of natives were cutting the peeling from the actual fruit of this bitter orange which was dried and exported to the U. S. for making extracts. The fruit itself is too bitter to be of any use and is thrown away.

After a drive of an hour or more down the mountain valley, splashing back and forth across the river, we noted that the valley was opening up and the mountains beginning to recede behind us as the country became flatter and the road better. Soon we were speeding along through stands of banana and coconut palms, past more frequent groups of native huts. Pigs, chickens, and goats that cluttered the road ahead of us now

scattered in all directions before us as we rolled along at thirty miles an hour. We were in Jacmel before we knew it.

Jacmel is not a large place, only fifteen thousand people. It is one of the many little ports dotting the coastline of Haiti, mainly engaged in shipping local products from the hinterland. A number of rivers converge and empty into a fine protected bay here, and hence it is a natural outlet for the coffee of the mountains and bananas of the valleys and plains. Today the town is isolated from the rest of the country because of the lack of good roads across the mountains. It is all the more interesting for being wholly neglected by tourists. The streets of Jacmel lead up from the shore level at odd angles of ascent so that we were continually running into interesting views in all directions. There were the usual overhanging balconies but in many cases the walls of the buildings came right out onto the narrow streets and huge doors offered glimpses into quaint patios and alleys. The whole place was extremely photogenic and full of interest to the artist. Above, the streets of the town level off for short distances, and here were the main business places. We heard the babel of voices in the huge iron-covered market place long before reaching it. Facing the market at the usual place of prominence was the church, surrounded by an iron fence to keep the busy street traffic from flowing into its doorways. The narrow streets would have been hopelessly congested with donkey and human traffic and squatting vendors overflowing from the market if it were not for the constant patrol of policemen keeping them all back in their proper places. In the higher part of the town was the small city park, its walled abutments overlooking the rooftops and trees directly below and the deep blue waters of the harbor beyond.

The only thing that detracted from the beauty of the scenes was the fact that most of the roofs were corrugated sheet iron instead of the colorful tile of the Spanish American countries. All over Haiti, even in the remote interior, these corrugated sheet metal roofs were an uncomfortable and unlovely mark of affluence.

With so few visitors to Jacmel there was not much in the way of hotels. However, we made out very well for dinner at practically the

only good hotel in town. Dinner consisted of a steak with all the creole trimmings including the usual beans, rice, plantain, breadfruit, and avocado and tomato salad. In this case the breadfruit was simply boiled but it had been made fairly palatable with meat gravy.

After a sociable meal with about a half dozen others around the same table we started talking about our return to Port au Prince. Several persons voiced surprise that we expected to return the same day. Although it had rained for a short time during dinner this had apparently blown over and at the time I did not get the significance of the protests. It was still early, about one o'clock and it was my understanding that rains in the mountains did not effect a rise in the river until about four o'clock. This would surely leave us ample time to get through the dangerous part of the pass—or so I thought.

So accustomed had I become to the clocklike regularity of these tropical convectional rains that I forgot to make allowance for the erratic nature of the climatic clock in these Caribbean islands where catastrophic floods, rainstorms, and even hurricanes appear without schedule or warning. On the mainland it is so easy to explain and predict the regularity of these daily convectional rains. Rain in the islands is less regular.

It was fresh and cool upon leaving Jacmel for our return to Port au Prince though it was cloudy and threatening overhead. Concern lent speed to our return trip over this first part. The first half dozen miles passed quickly. Judging by the appearance of the roads it had apparently not rained very hard in the lower valley, at least. Finally we came to the waters of the main river itself as the valley started to close in on us, and we breathed a sigh of relief to see it flowing along at its former low level. We leaned back to enjoy the return trip now.

We came to the first ford across the river and plunged in with the confidence resulting from scores of such fordings made on the way down. The river was spread out very wide here and although we made it through all right, it seemed to be just a little—just a *little*—deeper. Charley and I turned to each other with the same questioning look. But our recollection of the depths of the various fords on the way down

was rather mixed together. Some we remembered had been deeper than others. The shallower ones we had passed with ease. We began to relax, but the sputtering of the motor in the middle of a crossing brought us back to reality. By racing the motor out of gear and letting it take hold suddenly we gradually pulled ourselves out with a few spark plugs missing. We blamed ourselves for the difficulty and decided to take it easier. A water ford should always be approached in low gear, so that the slow rate of speed does not splash up water on the motor.

No doubt about it, as we pushed on each ford got deeper, the water swirled about the car more angrily. From being inconvenienced by an occasional wet spark plug, we became accustomed to regularly stalling in every crossing. With the radiator boiling as a result of disconnecting the fan belt so as not to spray the motor, we had less and less power to master bigger and bigger problems.

As we sat completely stalled, our feet sloshing in muddy water, planning hurriedly on what to take with us on a dash to the hills, a group of natives came along. Charley hailed them for help, which they gave gladly. Knowing that this couldn't happen at every crossing, we pressed coins on them and begged them to follow along and help us with other crossings. We hadn't far to go to pass the main tributary of the Gouche, but it was a race between us and high water.

We "had it" finally, in sight of the tributary that had us worried, and that worried us increasingly as we watched its muddy water boil angrily into the main stream. There was no hope. Water swirled halfway to the top of the seats, and the motor had long since become just so much extra weight. Our crew pushed valiantly, but nothing happened. "Let's start picking up to take to the hills," Charley suggested. But I wanted to try once more. I stripped hurriedly and leaped out into the water. So many fewer pounds to push, and one more man to push them. It turned the trick; the Willys wallowed slowly across and the big scare was over. This was the last fording place swollen by the tributary down which was coming the flood water that had been causing us all the trouble. Above this point the Gouche River was normal in depth again and a much smaller stream. We had finally left the

danger of becoming marooned behind and it was only a short distance now to the top of the pass. This was one of the closest shaves on the whole trip. The delicate balance of success or failure had been measured by a possible inch or two of water or a moment of time. We learned later that the waters behind us had actually risen sufficiently to have washed away the whole car. At the top of the pass Charley pulled out the bottle of Cognac which he had brought along "just in case it might come in handy." The rest of the trip back to Port au Prince was only a trip to town.

That was only the first round with Haitian highways. It was interesting enough in its way in spots, but it was only a curtain-raiser to the rest of the republic. By all odds the most thrilling of all our Caribbean motor trips was the drive to Cap Haitien on the north coast, which took in the spectacular ruins of the palace and fortress of the fabulous despot, Emperor Henri Christophe.

This was a journey of several days, across a number of mountain ranges, over roads and lack of roads of every sort, through terrain that ranged from arid coastal desert to lush rain forest and cloud-swept crags. This trip, added to our jaunt to Jacmel, completed one of our primary objectives; it spanned Haiti from south to north coast.

We followed the main street out of Port au Prince and past the airfield where the paved road ended, although it was solid stone for miles farther on. Crossing the Cul de Sac River twelve miles out, we came to the famous sulphur baths, the colorful waters of which made the air redolent with the aroma of ripe henfruit. We could see the southern peninsula of the country out over the water in the dim distance across the Gulf of Gonave, as our road followed close to the shore line. It was semi-desert country, cactus mixed with thorny vegetation. We forded a stream near the town of Cabaret and rolled on up the road close beside the blue waters of the Gulf. We paused here and there to listen to bands of roadworkers singing lustily—a work into which they poured considerably more skill and enthusiasm than they gave to their mattocks and shovels. A companion we had brought along explained that for the most part these were improvised songs, made up

often in jest about one another. We were listening in on the famed Calypso singing, better known in the island of Trinidad but practiced by natives of African culture everywhere in the West Indies in varying degrees.

It was a beautiful route, even though the road was poor in places. Sometimes the green slopes of the mountains crowded the highway to the very edge of the water, where we caught occasional glimpses of a dugout canoe or a white triangular patch of sail. As we rounded the gulf shores to a point where the land caught more of the prevailing moisture-laden breezes, the vegetation was more dense. In the misty distance across the water we could see now the island of Gonave.

At the Montrouis River we crossed an old iron bridge densely packed with black humanity, squatting on the ground on market day with their meager wares spread out before them. We had to inch along slowly by car as they picked up their goods with the best of good nature and got out of the road for us to pass, then closed in behind to resume their stations on the roadbed. This slow motion of black waves giving way to the prow of our car and swirling back again in its wake went on for the better part of a mile. In the waters under the bridge and in the shade of the graceful palms that arched over the sandy beach, hordes of black youngsters plunged and played, laughed and shouted, for all the world like any bunch of kids instead of denizens of a fearsome voodoo land.

Beyond we came on another group of road workers, indifferently engaged in toil but doing a magnificent job of singing, singing of a more advanced sort than we had heard before. While I gave the cameras a workout, Gladys was enchanted by the glorious and powerful voice of the leader of the group, who carried the solo part, the others joining in harmoniously from time to time. Haiti will have wonderful highways when her highway workers learn to put the same enthusiasm and co-operative spirit into their labor that they put into their song.

We stopped in St. Marc for lunch, and wandered briefly through the neglected park. We discussed the photogenic properties of a row of old bronze cannon half buried in the sand at the edge of the park,

but half-buried old cannon are everywhere in Haiti. We found these particular ones less interesting than the lunch, and we were hungry for lunch. Just outside of St. Marc we came upon a big banana-loading job, for we were entering now into the richest banana section of the whole republic, the Plaine de L'Artibonite. Bunches—which are always called stems until they reach the corner grocer—were rolling in to the pier by truck and plantation railway, and the loading piers were black beehives of activity. Negroes were hurrying the stems from truck or flatcar down to the pier, where they were loaded aboard lighters and taken out to the steamer anchored in the bay. Half-naked and with sweating black bodies glistening in the sun, they looked like long strings of army ants bent on a single task. They were paid a few cents for each stem carried, and the prospect of plenty of money to spend that night, added to the competitive spirit, led many of them to run at times with their heavy burdens down to the pier.

Beyond, the highway cut inland for some distance from the sea to skirt the foothills of the mountains that completely enclose the Artibonite Plain. This plain is a low-lying, semiarid section, ideal for bananas when irrigated. A number of rivers flowing across it furnish a plentiful supply of water. The Artibonite River itself is the largest river of the entire island and has its origin deep in the neighboring Dominican Republic. Through here we found the greatest evidences of modernity that we met with anywhere in the country sections of Haiti, though most of it must be credited to American enterprise. Miles and miles of neat masonry irrigation ditches furnished water for many square miles of rich green banana plants that stood in endless ranks all across the plain and down to the sea. Farther on, men with modern spraying equipment were engaged in the endless task of fighting back the tropical pests and insidious virus diseases that would wipe out the crop if care were relaxed for even a season. Now and then we passed clusters of neat, well-painted buildings, in the midst of carefully tended grounds—the homes and offices of managers of the banana plantations. In other places were rows of neat homes for workers built with attention to principles of good sanitation.

At the farthest point inland we came to the town of Dessalines, named for one of the great Haitian leaders at the time of the fight for independence. It was at a point not far from here that he is said to have originated the Haitian flag by taking the French tricolor and ripping out the white center which he said stood for white domination, trampling it under foot and raising aloft the blue and red as the symbol of the new Haitian nation.

North of here our road was crowded by the mountains so close to the flooded Estere River that we were driving at times through water. Here and there men were fishing with nets in cultivated fields. Then we climbed to higher ground and crossed the Quinte River into the town and port of Gonaives. This city is third in size in all Haiti, and is located on a deep bay, making it an admirably protected port. Outside the town, flat shorelands but slightly above sea level are ideal for the manufacture of salt by evaporating the sea water in great flats that are easily diked off. The waterfront of Gonaives was crowded with small sailing craft engaged in coastwise shipping out of this port. Crews of many of the ships were preparing their evening meals over open charcoal fires built on the deck. Stevedores were busy loading mangoes and avocados for Port au Prince and other towns along the Gulf of Gonave. The economy of the country centers largely about the shores of this Gulf.

At Gonaives we put up at the Royal Hotel, a gaudy yellow building whose front was dominated by an overhanging frame balcony supported by classic Corinthian columns. Accommodations were far from luxurious but were certainly well worth the seventy cents they cost us. We were comfortable enough, but clearly we were well beyond the tourist belt. Meals here were fifty cents regardless of what we ate. Our breakfast next morning was fried Spam and eggs, fried potatoes, good bread and coffee, and imported butter. When we arrived, however, we still had left part of a lunch packed for us in Port au Prince, so we dropped in at a refreshment spot for a bottle of Pepsi Cola to wash down our sandwiches.

We shared the refreshment stand with a group of well-dressed young

fellows who were amusing themselves painfully playing scratchy records on an old gramophone in the corner. The records, things like "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry," dated from the Twenties, the time of the Marine occupation of Haiti. Seldom has sovereign might inflicted such callous punishment on a defenseless people. As Americans, jointly responsible for that outrage, we felt it no less than fitting that we should sit there and suffer too.

Gonaives had been a main headquarters during the marine occupation, and marines had apparently left more than gramophone records. The young men gathered here represented the generation born during the days of American occupancy. Some of them were pure white. Others ranged from olive-skinned to quite dark, but the average for the group was lighter than the average for Haiti.

We had parked the car in the shade of a big tree that stood beside a garage in Gonaives to have the timing checked, as it was overheating and losing in power greatly. We returned to it and sat in the front seat while the mechanic worked away. Startled by the sound of what seemed to be small pebbles hurled against the car, we both looked about for whatever mischievous boys might be doing this. The mechanic noticed our puzzled expressions, and offered an explanation. The tree under which we were parked was a Bomb Tree, and when its long black pods split upon ripening they curl up with a snap and hurl the seeds in all directions with considerable violence. It was the rattle of these seeds against the car that had surprised us.

At Gonaives we had the last look we would get of the coast until we came down to the sea again at Cap Haitien on the north coast. We crossed the flat estuary of the Quinte River, and rolled up this river valley as the mountains closed in on us and pushed us steadily upward into the sky. This was the Marmalade range. In the time of the Emperor Henri Christophe this was a dukedom, and one of the dukes of Christophe's gaudy court bore the catchy title of the Duke of Marmalade. The Marmalade Mountains merged gradually with the higher Plaisance Chain, and not—as one might think—with the Big Rock Candy Mountain.

We were getting ever deeper into the remote interior, into land few tourists see. The mountains grew higher and ever more rugged, though the rich and isolated little valleys between supported quite a dense population. It was a land close to the moon and far, far out of this world. The clusters of steep thatched roofs were African *kraals*, no less, transplanted from a world away, and the crude stick fences that surrounded them heightened the effect of an African compound. Goats and chickens mingled freely with naked black children in the doorways, and domestic animals of every sort overflowed into the infrequently traveled road. Here and there we had to stop to wait while a nanny goat shook loose her offspring and made way for us in leisurely fashion. Goats and pigs had long sticks lashed to their necks to prevent them from wandering off into the dense growth on every side.

At the village of Ennery the road started for the sky in earnest and in a hurry. The unpaved road and loose rubble we had been traveling over for miles gave way to great flat stones cemented together. It was an odd sort of roadbed, and necessary, for the grade was so steep that loose rubble over which we had been traveling would have rolled down the hill by gravity. The mountains lay out on either side covered with a crazyquilt patchwork of a variety of crops, even grains of the temperate zone, for we were high now. Despite our return to the temperate zone by way of altitude, here and there a native *caille* clinging precariously to the mountain's flank reminded us anew that this was the heart of Africa's stepchild.

As we topped the crest of the first great mountain to descend into the valley of Trois Rivières, the vegetation changed, for we were on the dry side of the mountain now. Flora of semiarid regions, thorns and *yuca* and even cactus, came again into its own. The road leveled off a bit as it wound around the mountain's flank, and it became far less impressive. It was a narrow, rutty track with grass growing in the center, with occasional turnouts for passing traffic, as it was now for the most part strictly a one-car road. Some of these turnouts were located at watering places, where cool and crystal-clear water from mountain springs tumbled down over the rocks.

Down in the valley we were again in the land of palms and breadfruit trees as we came into the town of Plaisance on one of the branches of the Trois Rivières. This is one of Haiti's important rivers, winding for miles through the mountains to flow into the sea opposite Tortue Island. It was the grassy plain at this river's end that gave to the language the term *buccaneer*, though the first buccaneers were only driers of the meat of wild cattle, who lived by selling provisions to pirates. Oddly enough, directly across Haiti and lying just off the south coast is the corresponding island of Vaches, where Henry Morgan recruited the pirate crew that sacked Panama in 1793 in the most stupendous pirate feat of all time. Truly this Haiti is cradled in memories of a stirring past!

Plaisance, tucked away in a remote break in the mountains, was a quaint and interesting spot. It was a neater and more eye-catching spot than many, too, for paint in gaudy colors had been used on the town more recently and more generously than was the case in many towns. The police station where we registered was a smart affair in bright yellow, but the rest of the rainbow was well represented about the town. As we drove up, one of the Garde Civil was whistling "Way Down Upon the Swanee River," another reminder that once the marines had landed here.

Though the guard was deferential and overwhelmed by the honor of having a white woman in its midst, it nevertheless insisted on a careful check on passports and registry. We had secured a special travel permit and recommendation from the chief of the Garde Civil in Port au Prince, and this helped a lot. There was of course but little foreign travel here, and the Garde was hard put to it to keep busy. We pulled away from the station and started back in the direction from which we came to make a stop at a little refreshment stand we had passed on the way in, and we were brought up sharp by the blast of a whistle. This was not the direction of Cap Haitien, for which our papers called! But after we explained that we were merely thirsty, everything was quite all right. We inquired about fresh water to fill our

canteens, and the officer escorted us to the private well back of the barracks which served the Garde Civil.

At the edge of Plaisance, as we came up to a corner, we were struck by such a din and babel as had engulfed us during the riot back in Port au Prince. We looked down the street and saw a long, open structure with a thatched roof, boiling with black folk. It was only a banana-gathering depot on market day. Piles of dried banana leaves and stems of green fruit were piled everywhere, and a host of people were busy weighing them, counting them, stacking them, and arguing about them. Here agents of the fruit company bought bananas as they were brought in from the hills on donkeys or human pack animals, and sent them down the river to the loading port. All about the rim of the activity folks were squatted about small fires preparing a meal after a hard trip in from the country.

One enterprising colored fellow had set up a unique shop for repairing damaged cooking utensils. He was kept fairly busy, with several soldering irons heating in a charcoal fire. Draft for the fire was furnished by a Rube Goldberg masterpiece of inventive genius. A crude bellows was attached to a crank, for which motive power was furnished by a rope belt running on an old bicycle wheel, which was attached to the hands of a colored boy.

The rest of the trip, across the Plaisance Range, through the valley of the Limbe River, over the lower coastal range and onto the rich coastal plain that slopes gently down to Cap Haitien, was largely a repetition of what had gone before. The coastal plain was a change after the mountains. This part of Haiti is the most fertile, and the most rich in history. Here and there along the way were crumbling ruins of old French plantations, reared in the day when this was the fairest and richest of France's colonies and then destroyed in the bloodiest of revolutions when the blacks threw off the yoke of France in the early years of the nineteenth century. These crumbling ruins, and all the wealth and all the violence they stood for, were in sharp contrast with the crowds of happy colored folks along the road, laughing and singing on their way to or from the towns, greeting us with a friendly

smile and a happy *Bo' jour, blanc*. We passed under the double arch of the moss-covered gateway to Cap Haitien, and the most difficult of our automobile objectives was accomplished. We had crossed Haiti the hard way.

Cap Haitien, second city of the republic in size, is first in historic interest and high in photogenic quality. The run-down-at-the-heels quality of much of the city, which is the essence of the picturesque when found away from home, was accentuated by the gaudy paint in other parts of town. The narrow streets, steeply pitched to carry off the heavy precipitation of the port in the rainy season, added much to the city's photographic appeal though inadequately serving the needs of traffic. In addition to serving their more prosaic purpose as conveyors of traffic, the streets were also playgrounds for the young, siesta spots for the old, and to some extent market places for everybody. The great iron shed of the market place was inadequate to such a mass of humanity, and here and there on the streets about it "little business" men and women had their piles of rice or beans or plantains, their stacks of home-made shoes, their bunches of handicraft, all piled in the street. They themselves were often to be found dozing beside their wares in the full glare of the tropical sun. After Port au Prince, Cap Haitien is certainly the largest "black market" in Haiti.

At the Pension Martin we found quarters as good as could be expected in a city as yet little patronized by tourists and with nothing built to tourist specifications. It was a large frame building with rooms of varying degrees of privacy on the second floor. Originally some of these rooms had been large, but expanded local business had resulted in many of the rooms being cut up with flimsy partitions that didn't reach the ceiling.

Toilet and bath facilities for the most part were only slightly ahead of Chic Sale standards. Our room had running water, but when we pushed aside a galvanized bucket under the wash bowl and pulled the stopper after washing, the water ran out on the floor. It was the only place we have ever seen with running water into—but not out of—a room.

In contrast, the dining room was a model of Victorian style, with

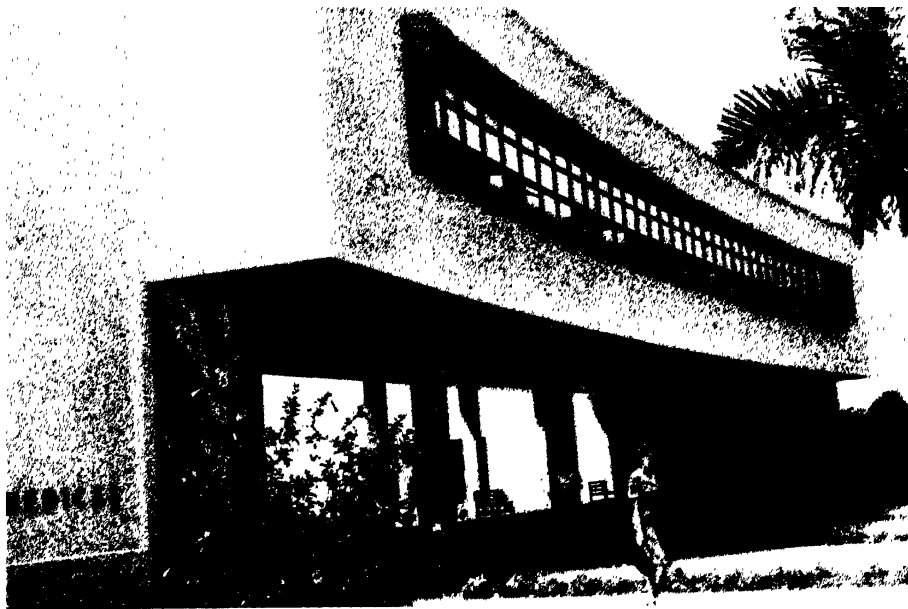
magnificent old-fashioned lamps, tables spread with the finest of china and silverware, and the sideboard adorned with the best of chinaware bric-a-brac of an old English home.

We arrived in Cap Haitien early enough in the day to get in the first important bit of sight-seeing that afternoon—a trip to Sans Souci, at the village of Milot, twelve miles out. This had been the palace of Emperor Henri Christophe.

We rode out to Sans Souci over cobblestone pavement carpeted with grass. We scraped off the car, as best we could in the village of Milot, the enthusiastic but inept guides and the host of beggars who besieged us for the privilege of explaining and displaying Sans Souci. We climbed the grass-grown and ill-kept stone stairway that led up onto the broad terrace. There was everything in the magnificent backdrop of mountain and sky to dwarf the spectacle of the palace itself. There was everything in the stark and moss-grown towers, in the gaping windows, in the sweeping and sad spectacle of unkempt decay, to detract from what the eye had to offer to the spirit here. Yet of all the ruined records of the New World's thrilling past, this was the most spine-tingling, this most stood out. To be sure, our feelings may have been influenced to a degree by some knowledge of what this spot had been, but it was none the less overwhelming for what it still was, written in timeless marble, marble brought from Europe as ballast in the holds of coffee ships.

Here, well over a century past, an awesome and fantastic court had held sway over a teeming black world, a court created and dominated by a powerful black man who was blessed and cursed with a physique and a touch of genius such as are given seldom to mortal men; an illiterate black who had learned about the world as a waiter in New Orleans but who was born with an instinctive knowledge of men; a black leader of an aimless mob who was able to stand up to imperial France.

Here a minor official from Cabaret had bowed and scraped before the Duke of Marmalade and the Count of Lemonade, unlettered all, and no one laughed. Here a British ambassador had stood aghast at a review of twelve crack regiments in twelve sets of resplendent uniforms. Mighty England couldn't raise twelve such regiments as that! It was only long



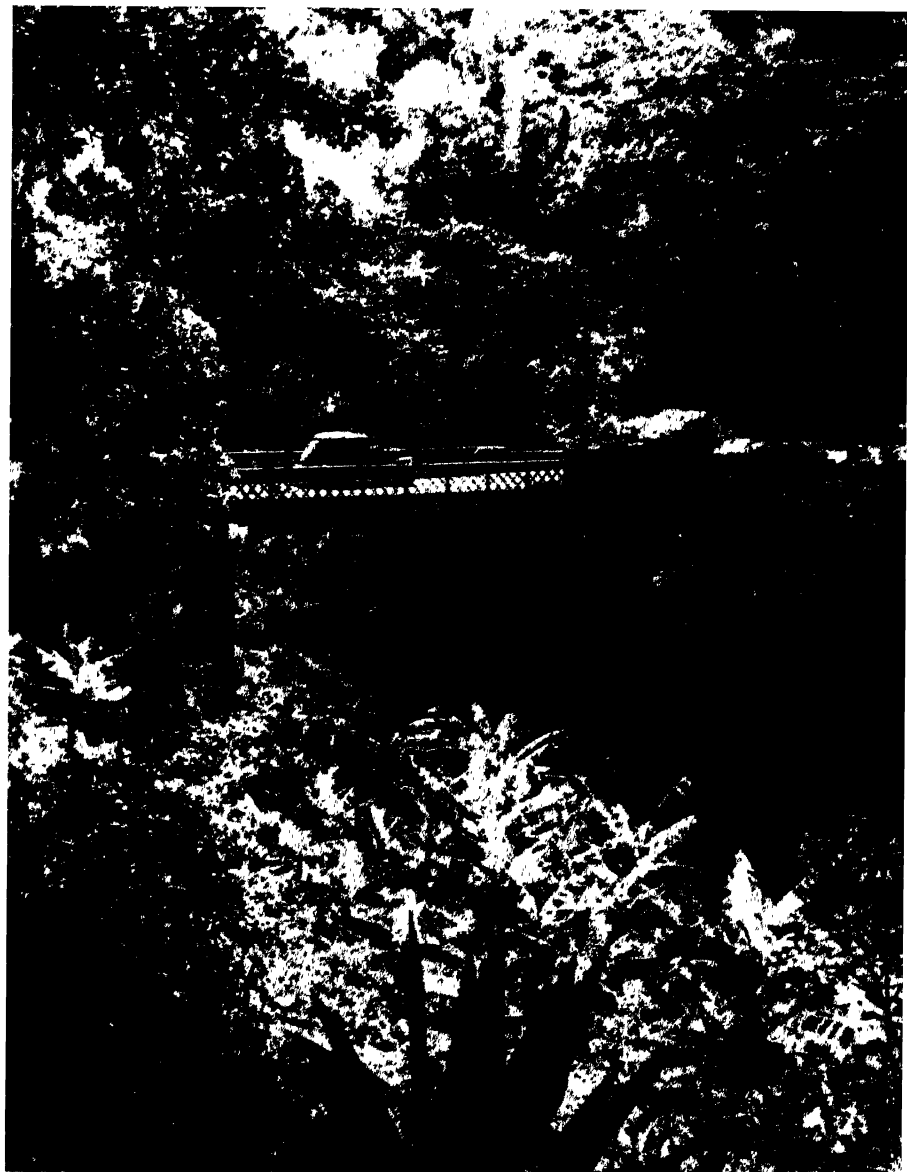
Medical School of Trujillo City University is one of the many examples of modernistic architecture in the country

Open air school at Humacao, Puerto Rico





Puerto Rico is noted for its handicrafts



Bridge near Aibonito on route of old Spanish Highway across Puerto Rico



Drying coffee berries near Ciales, Puerto Rico

after he was dead and gone that whispering gossip said it was but *one* crack regiment, dazzling and confusing in twelve hurried costume changes.

We climbed up and up the broad paved terraces to the top, terraces teeming with jungle growth that had been formal gardens long ago. We paused to wipe our brows in the shade of the Star Apple tree on the top terrace; shade teeming with ghosts, for here the Emperor Henri Christophe had sat to dispense justice, to review his troops, to gaze across the broad and fertile fields from which he had wrung wealth with an iron hand. We wandered into the ruined, roofless rooms, and conjured up the beauty that was here when these walls were draped in Gobelin tapestries, gilded mirrors, fine paintings, the pick of the courtly magnificence of all Europe. We marveled at the ingenuity that generations before its time had run cool mountain streams in conduits beneath the floors, air conditioning a century ahead of its time, though now these channels were choked with roots and inhabited by burrowing things. We listened as an ineradicable and obsequious guide droned on about the facts of the place—palace of three hundred and sixty-five doors, one for each day of the year—modeled after the palace of Frederick the Great, for whom Emperor Christophe had much admiration, from whom he received his ideas of governing—begun in 1811, and finished in one year by the labor of gangs of five thousand men and women at a time—suites for royal family, ministers, ministers of state, officers of the guard—here was a magnificent library for a man who could not read—below, a royal mint.

But it was mostly lies, as facts and figures so often are. Henri Christophe had not received the spark from Frederick the Great but from God, or nature, or the laws of chance. He had received not ideas but a gift of genius such as is seldom given to mortals—genius that will shine on to the end of time to all blacks like a lamp, like a beacon light, like black sweat in the sun. He had built not a palace begun in 1811 but a record and a dream of courtly pomp and majesty that will be remembered until earthquakes shake Haiti down into the sea. We knew that tomorrow we would see the Citadel of La Ferriere and that it too was

awesome. But La Ferriere was only a symbol of might from a day when might was only muscle. Here a man who had begun and ended with nothing had built a kingly court. Most of his courtiers couldn't read or write. But they commanded people who could.

From the rear of Sans Souci a paved stone road in former days wound steeply up across the shoulder of Bonnet-a-L'Evêque to the impregnable stronghold of Citadelle La Ferriere, invisible from below because of the intervening mountains. Today this means of ascent is all but abandoned, overgrown with brush and trees, so ruined by a century of decay and neglect that it is scarcely visible. Moreover, it is a tiresome climb of many hot hours under a merciless sun. Few but the hardest of sight-seers risk the difficult ascent. Saddle animals are obtainable in the village of Milot, but walking is much preferred to precarious, chafing torture up a steep trail mounted in the roughest of saddles on a raw-boned mule or burro. It was too late for us to think of making the ascent that day, for it would be nearly dark when we arrived, with no opportunity for photography. In fact we had been warned that even the early afternoon is not good for photography there, for about midday the clouds roll up from the ocean and cover the peaks above. So we fell back to Cap Haitien.

While in town we looked up the Wood family, whose name had been given us by mutual friends. Mr. Wood had been a missionary for many years here, and had reared his family in Port au Prince. He was away on a trip to Jamaica, but Mrs. Wood received us hospitably and treated us to cakes and tea. Here too we made the acquaintance of their twenty-year-old son, George, who volunteered to guide us to the Citadel next morning over a mountain road that rose by easy ascents to a high point directly back of the place, from whence we could easily complete the ascent on foot. We would escape the hot, tortuous climb from sea level at Sans Souci, and we could carry more camera equipment to the top. The idea of making another record with the car, that of driving nearly up to the Citadel, was also an influencing factor in our decision to accept his courteous offer.

Although we had left word with the hotel owner to call us long before

dawn, the eager anticipation with which we looked forward to this trip served us as a reliable alarm clock. The cook prepared a hearty breakfast for us, and packed a lunch for the day. We were hardly dressed when George Wood drove up with our car, which he had put in the garage of his home for the night. Through darkness we made our way out through the quiet streets of Cap Haitien. Light was barely discernible in the eastern sky as we rolled across the plain toward Milot.

Just before reaching the village we turned off from our road of the day before and took a much cruder road around the mountain. Even at this hour we met groups of natives whose dark skins melted into the shadows of the roadside, natives bound for market or for their fields in the wee, cool hours. Many of them do their work in the semi-sunlight of the very early morning, getting most of their day's work done before the scorching rays of the sun make themselves felt.

Gradually our road began to climb. The way became rougher. George advised us that we were now in back of the mountain on which the Citadel was located. We stopped to refresh ourselves and fill our canteens with the clear, cold water that tumbled down the mountain wall. In a spot just off the road beyond the settlement of Dondon we parked and locked the car after unloading our equipment and supplies. Several natives appeared from nowhere and asked to be engaged as porters. We hired two at half a dollar each. Placing our equipment on their heads, they silently stepped off onto a narrow dirt trail that wound through dew-soaked foliage. We followed in single file. It was a one-ring African safari, with black porters bearing burdens on their heads and the rest of us in pith helmets strung out along the trail.

The energy consumed in climbing the first steep grades soon silenced everyone. We were strung out too far along the trail anyway. The ground was slippery from dew nearly as heavy as rain at this high altitude, and pushing through the wet brush was a task not conducive to unnecessary conversation of a sort suited to the printed page. No sign of the Citadel loomed up ahead. Not even much of the mountain was visible through the cultivated coffee and bananas and dense trees along the way. We passed a few black natives descending the trail barefoot, with stems of

bananas balanced on their heads, with the smaller stems borne on the heads of the youngsters as whole families came down from their mountain homes to the trading center below.

Then suddenly, high and far ahead, we got our first glimpse of the Citadel. Distant though it was at first, it was an impressive sight. The great stone walls in the form of the prow of a ship rose straight and starkly upward from the steeply sloped mountain's crest. Whatever weariness we felt now was overcome by the growing impressiveness of the mighty monument to power, as it loomed ever larger around each turn in the trail. Now we came into the grass-covered cobblestones of the old road. The great height and length of the tremendous fortress became more apparent as we arrived at the base of the prow and followed the wide incline that became a stone-walled terrace along the south side of the forbidding walls that towered high over our heads. Here and there amidst the weed-grown debris of the terrace we stumbled upon cannon large and small, and solid cannonballs all heavily corroded with a century's rust.

Up steps of weathered stone we passed through a massive doorway guarded by a heavy wooden door, and paused while our eyes became adjusted to the change from blinding sunlight to the dungeon-dark interior. A musty, dank smell assailed our nostrils in the semidark. By the light that filtered in through high slits of windows that revealed the tremendous thickness of the walls, we marveled at the solid masonry on every side, the flagstone floor, the high-walled and vaulted roof, and a long flight of stone steps ahead that led upward to the sunlight.

We climbed this stairway which led up through the out-thrust prow of the fortress, and stood in a deep moat that surrounded the other side. Climbing out of this, we crossed a drawbridge that led across the moat in much the style of the Middle Ages, and were within the main galleries of the great fort. Here were long rows of cannon nosing out through gun ports high up in the wall from the outside but near floor level from where we were. Back of the cannon were rooms half-filled with heavy cannonballs, and empty rooms that had been used for storing powder.

On the north side the fortress wall dropped down forty feet or more,

becoming a part of the precipitous mountain slope that was almost as unscalable as the battlements themselves. The west end or back of the fortress rose higher still, with more galleries guarded by cannon at the portholes. The huge stone battleship extended fully a quarter of a mile from the prow in front to the battlements in the rear. Many parts of it, due to the untimely death of Christophe, were never finished. We clambered over the thick walls that compartmented the interior and looked down into cavernous depths that acted as ventilating shafts for the dungeon rooms far below in the very bowels of the mountain. Rumor has it that Christophe had buried great treasures in some of these forgotten dungeons, but that is but another of the fanciful tales told of the man whose indomitable spirit raised his lowly people and mistreated country to a glimpse of greatness. In a little shed of stone in the central courtyard repose the remains of this black self-made king.

It was nearly noon before we had surfeited ourselves with exploration. Chilled by the damp dungeon-like interior, which is anything but cozy at this altitude, we stretched out in the sunlight on the flat top of the fortress. Here we lazed through the lunch we had brought along, and dreamed, and talked of the olden days when whole antlike black armies had toiled and sweat and died in the boiling sun to rear this stone monster under the driving lash of an insatiable and uneasy genius. Soft breezes drifted across the ramparts to temper the blazing tropic sun. We rose and wandered about; gazed out on the static sea of mountains that rolled down to the coastal plain; recalled the old tale of how Christophe had stood here inspecting his terrain by telescope until he caught sight of a black subject on a mountain slope committing the sin of laziness, napping during the day. Legend has it that he hurried to the galleries below to put that subject permanently to sleep with a cannon blast.

The little breezes grew sharp teeth, and came climbing over the ramparts bearing wisps of cloud. It was only a little while before these small cloud remnants were supplanted by cloud banks that came rolling in to break across our prow, to roll over the stone gunwales and engulf the bridge. Shot through the engulfing white were long shadows and boiling breaks in the mist, shadows of stone battlements and clear bits of open

air. Or were they more? Were they shadows of a ghostly black colossus—a black Gulliver striding the bridge of this stone battleship on a sea of mountains, wading decks awash with the dreams of his ghostly Lilliputian crew?

Maybe it was only that the majesty of the place was beginning to get us. Anyway, picture-taking was done for the day, and it was high time to start for home. It is too bad that Haiti couldn't end with the Citadel, for anything else was less than anticlimax. The long, grueling drive back to Port au Prince was just another trip to town.

From Port au Prince the next big problem was how to get out of Haiti. Unusual in this country, there were two roads. We might come back years later and drive over into the Dominican Republic via the fine, new international highway to Ciudad Trujillo. We had been over some miles of this highway out of Port au Prince, and had seen how fine it was. But we had been to the end of it too, and seen how ended it was. We had picked up reliable gossip about travel over the blueprint part of the road. Cars had been through, in the dry season. Ours was the wet season. Over in the Dominican Republic, in a section below sea level, things weren't so good. It was a hot, arid section. People were almost as scarce there as highways. If we got into trouble, we would have to wait for the country to fill up with settlers before we could get help. Yes, we *could* drive out of Haiti over the international highway, but it would be best to come back years later to do this, when the road is finished.

But there was another road, a road that would never be finished and had never been started. Like Topsy, it had "just growed." It wandered on its rutty way from town to town, with never an idea in the world of ending up at the edge of the dazzling Dominican Republic. It wandered out of Port au Prince across the Cul de Sac plain, just going places and not caring where or how fast. Then this road chased off after a goat, up into some dry hills that were good goat country. In fact the first mountain we climbed was named *Cabrite*, which is what a goat would call himself if he spoke French. The little Willys was getting tired, even after a good going-over in Port au Prince, and anyway it never did have much goat blood in its veins. We were both glad to see the other side

of the mountain and to drop down into Mirebalais. We wandered around the town a bit and soaked up atmosphere, for this town was something. It is famous for the fact that here a sociologist named M. J. Herskovits had lived and written a Haitian classic, *Life in a Haitian Valley*. To the Willys, this was just a chance to cool off. That's a job, under a Haitian sun.

Up and down, up and down. Desert and jungle, wet and dry, high and low, boil the water out of the radiator and fill 'er up again. That was us, getting out of Haiti. We got tired and the Willys got tired, and then Haiti gave up—barely beating us to it. The country rolled out a little flatter. Rocks and scrub growth gave way to grasslands. We leveled off lower still and came onto *ceibas* arched across the road, coconut palms waving us farewell. When our eyes got tired of green, we would run under the violent red shade of an occasional *flamboyan*—prodigal with its great crimson blossoms. Along the water courses the road ducked into holes cut into solid green jungle. Now and then, whenever rickets threatened to set in in the greenish dark, we would dash out of our jungle tunnel into a cultivated clearing.

Then people and cultivated lands took over and the jungle fell back, only occasionally throwing a short tunnel across the road. More ebony folk with ivory smiles and a friendly '*bo' jour, blanc*'. This was back country. These were backward folk, so unworldly they didn't even know enough to hold out an open palm to beg with when we stopped. Still, here and there they had things, things that surprised us, after what we had seen of Haitian roads. Steel bridges across the streams. Concrete aprons across the fords. After stuff we remembered, it was fun to splash across streams without a worry in the world.

At Belladere there was a gate across the road, with a few uniformed officials lolling about. This was the back door of Haiti. Our papers were inspected, more for something for the boys to do than anything else, for there isn't much tourist traffic through this gate. They handed back our papers, bid us a pleasant *au revoir*, and started to open the gate.

"Wait a minute," I said. I got out a camera and started through the proper motions.

Gladys called. "Hey, come and put on the brake. The car is moving."

I was busy trying to bring two nations into focus. And besides, I had left the car on a perfectly level spot. "Nonsense! You couldn't even push it," I said. "It's on the level."

"I don't care where you left it. It's moving!" She sounded worried. I quit my international affairs and looked up.

I blinked. The car *was* moving! You know how sometimes when it's hot, the hot air makes things waver? Maybe that was it. The gate was wavering rhythmically, too. I started toward the car, but I was dizzy, and I wavered. To much hot sun, huh? Gotta be careful.

Then it came to me, as I noticed the excitement in the group beside the gate. Earthquake! Not as good as the quake at the swimming pool, but not bad. Not bad! Not as stirring as Sans Souci. Not as stirring as Citadelle La Ferriere. Still, you have to admit that in any sense of the word an earthquake is stirring enough. Haiti, good old Haiti, had come through with a photo-finish fillip of anticlimax after all.

CHAPTER IX

"Always with Trujillo"

They say that Columbus loved best the land that became the Dominican Republic. Though the centuries have changed it, we are inclined to feel the same way.

Perhaps it was a mere string of coincidences that made our stay there so pleasant from the time we drove in from Haiti until we winged away from its western tip for Puerto Rico. Some might say that it was the master mind of the government that made our visit most pleasant there. But no master mind had planned the scenery, the gracious Spanish customs, nor the thrilling record of its past. However, no little credit must be given to the government that furnished us with roads that were a sheer delight to the Willys' tired old tires, with the best of accommodation in the West Indies, with a cleanliness and an amazing amount of modernity that was distinctive in the Caribbean.

The Dominican Republic—formerly Santo Domingo—occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, while Haiti with a far greater population is crowded into the western third. Haiti is black, and French in language. The Dominican Republic is white, and here we were back in the Spanish world where we could tell what was up without an interpreter.

I had often wondered how it was possible for one island to harbor two such different nations and peoples. After all, the two parts of the island have the same sort of physical geography, the same climates, the same crops. This was our first trip to Hispaniola, and we had ahead of us an object lesson of the extent to which history and political institutions can mold the economic and social life of a country. For immediately upon

crossing the border from Haiti into the Dominican Republic, great differences were apparent.

It was a few miles down the road from the gate that let us out of Haiti to the customs and immigration office that conferred on us the benediction of the Dominican Republic. The road was better. The Willys felt better. An officer in natty uniform guided us into the immigration office where we could talk Spanish again, and we felt better too. Linguistically, Haiti had been a headache. We had never studied French, and Haitian Creole French would still have been a problem if we had.

Customs and immigration inspection was courteous but thorough. Particular interest was shown in a few copies of Haitian newspapers we had brought along, as they contained the report of an interview or two we had obtained in that country. Heads were shaken—but only in amazement—over the large stock of film we carried, as film was still a scarce article out in The World. All in all, we had less trouble entering the Dominican Republic officially than we had elsewhere, though none of the countries we covered was really troublesome. To begin with, it is lots easier to drive into a country than to find an island-hopping boat to ship a car. A declaration we signed at the customs office gave us the privilege of driving anywhere in the country for a period of ninety days. We were instructed only to report to the immigration office upon reaching the capital, to obtain tourist cards. We were waved on.

But first we wished to have a look at this border town of Elias Pina. Not only was it our first town in a new land, but it was indeed a very modern showplace. Practically the whole town was modernistic in architecture, as most of it had been built under the regime of President Trujillo. Homes, schools, hospital, social centers, and an army barracks on the outskirts, were fine examples of Trujillo's work in rebuilding and modernizing the country, and this place was a far cry from what after years of travel we had come to expect in the way of a border town.

It was getting on toward dusk when we were through, and this was a fine time to discover that a short-circuit in our generator had nearly drained our battery. Correcting this with little loss of time and prevailing upon the neighborliness of our new hosts for a push, we took off

across the plain. Spurred by the need of getting a little “juice” back in the battery, we rolled along with some speed and no pauses. It didn’t matter much, for this was a semiarid section anyway. Most of the land was unsettled and consisted of scrawny grazing brush or sparsely tree-covered land. Houses were few and far between. The highway was hard surfaced but narrow, and there were many little bridges but one car wide. Meeting with hardly any traffic, we hurried on rather nervously in the growing dusk, knowing we didn’t dare to stop the car until we had recharged our battery a bit.

Nearly fifty miles of dull desert land rolled by us before we came to San Juan, the first town large enough to offer much in the way of a hotel for the night. When we reached it, San Juan was as dim as our own headlights, for their electric light plant was having troubles and was limping along on half its normal capacity. We prowled up and down the dark streets looking for hotels, finding them, and then finding them full for the night. Slowly and darkly we worked our way down from the best to something less than that. A kind-hearted soul directed us to a hotel that was a lot less than the best. Here, too, at the Hotel *Benefactor*, we found every room taken. But when we explained our plight, the landlady volunteered to make a place for us. An obliging male guest offered to give up his room and move into another with two other men for the night.

So our troubles were over, but only moderately. The room we won through this neighborly sacrifice was but a shed in the yard, a deluxe doghouse without running water or housekeeping privileges, equipped with half a set of twin beds. At least, though, it was refuge if not rest for the night. We should be thankful for it, after an exhausting day. But—this President Trujillo! If he wanted to modernize the country—that was all right with us. It was his country; let him do as he pleases with it. But why should he go so far as to equip it with hotel room shortages, just like the United States?

There was one advantage to that shed, though. It wasn’t hard to rise from that narrow-gauge Spartan pallet and get off to an early start. We pulled out at five-thirty, with nobody else stirring about the place. We

detoured past the public market, which was already bustling, and picked up a few bananas to stave off the pangs until we might come on a restaurant open for business along the way.

The lure of the countryside held us back but little on the way toward the capital. The road continued to run through flat country, with towns monotonously alike. Whether because of fear of earthquakes or because of custom, most of the buildings of the towns were low, one-story affairs of painted wood. In the larger places there were a few more substantial buildings of stuccoed masonry, but the Dominican Republic, like Haiti and Jamaica, uses much more wood for construction than we had been accustomed to see in most of the Latin American world.

The farther we drove eastward toward the capital, Trujillo City, the better the road became, the greener the land, the closer and better the towns. Near Azua our highway joined the highway which follows along much of the south coast of the country. Now we caught occasional glimpses of the blue Caribbean on our right. Here the highway was asphalt instead of the stone surfaced which had been improving gradually all the way from the border. There was more traffic on the road, modern automobiles as well as natives on donkeys or afoot. The rank *campeche* brush and other plants of semi-arid land gave way to palms, live oaks draped with moss and bearing corsages of orchidaceous growth, and acacias decked out in yellow blossoms.

The road took a short turn inland and climbed over a range of mountains that came down to the sea here. On the other side of the mountain it wound down to the Ocoa River which it crossed by a long toll bridge, the only toll bridge we encountered in this or any other country in the Caribbean. The toll was forty cents.

Bani was the largest town on our way between San Juan where we had spent the night and San Cristobal near the capital. Here we decided to have a combination breakfast and lunch or *brunch*, as it is called in English. We stopped at a local restaurant and had prepared for us a small steak and potatoes. As we sat there looking out at passersby we both commented on the attractive appearance of the brunette young girls. In fact, all these Dominicans of both sexes were rather good looking, and

nearly all are pure Spanish. We learned later that this town of Bani was particularly noted for its attractive girls for some reason or other, more so than any other town of the republic.

Some of the buildings here were of frame, some of Spanish stucco, but nearly all were painted in colorful hues. A store or two bore the sign “*Con Trujillo Siempre*”—Always with Trujillo. We were to see similar signs all over the country. But this did not impress us so much as the neatness and orderliness everywhere apparent. Some private and public buildings might be poor but they were seldom if ever ramshackle. The central park was always in good repair, generally with neat concrete walks and benches, and always carefully landscaped.

Along the road now were neat irrigation ditches to water the corn, the cane fields, the bananas. Various kinds of palms, including the ever gracefully leaning coconut palm, were common.

At San Cristobal, we ran into modernity that fairly dazzled us. Some of the public buildings were gleaming white and modernistic in the extreme. The central plaza was a model of neatness and planning, and had apparently been but recently completed. A fine church and an extremely modernistic bank and motion picture house faced on this central park. A wide new boulevard led away from the square toward the capital. San Cristobal was the birthplace of President Trujillo, and it is not at all remarkable that it should be a show place.

It was a drive of but half an hour to the capital, over a fine highway on which new cars, trucks, and buses shared the road with primitive oxcarts and horse-drawn vehicles. Homes of peasants along the way were simple but neat and colorfully painted, and here and there we looked back into a more pretentious estate. Estates and wealthy homes became frequent, and before we knew it the highway became one of the city's main boulevards. As we drove down this palm-shaded boulevard we had more than a sneaking suspicion that we were going to like this place.

Our first objective was the United States Embassy, housed in a building that looks like a fine country club, set among spacious lawns in the better residential section of the city. Here we picked up our mail and

made arrangements to stay in the magnificent government-owned Jaragua Hotel overlooking the ocean.

The Jaragua Hotel is without shadow of doubt the best and most luxurious hostelry of the whole Caribbean, and an important part in the Dominican Republic's bid for favorable notice from the outside world. It is, as a plaque on the main entrance informed us, a monument to the capital city and to the rule of Trujillo. The sign further advises us that it was built during the era of Trujillo. It is a white, modernistic structure with spacious sun decks and open-air pavilions. It has its own luxurious open-air swimming pool landscaped into the front of the building and facing the seas, its own casino, its own open-air ballroom where one might dance under moon and stars. The building reminded us of the New York World's Fair in its architecture, with indirect lighting at night.

But the Jaragua Hotel is by no means the only example of ultra-modern architecture in a very modern city. There are modernistic schools, hotels, government buildings. Even the sanitary central market building is a notable departure from the shambles and chaos that are most Caribbean public markets. Wide modern boulevards, like the palm-lined George Washington Boulevard along the sea, knit together with modern transportation the parts of a modern city.

Why is Trujillo City so much more modern than any other Latin American city? It all centers about an event, and a man to meet the emergency of the event. The city, ancient Santo Domingo, was almost totally destroyed by hurricane in 1930. Even before the hurricane struck, the country was economically in straitened circumstances and politically in the state of strain and turmoil that typifies most of this part of the world. Taking a firm grip on the reins of government, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo brought order out of chaos and began rebuilding the capital, following this up with modernization of a great deal of the rest of the country. The state of emergency that brought the opportunity about has long since passed, but Trujillo discovered that he liked to hold the reins of government.

Nor has he done badly. Of all the lands of the Caribbean, the Do-

minican Republic is the most modern. With the powerful and progressive parts of the world in the age of the atom, much of the Caribbean still dozes along in the age of Adam. The Dominican Republic alone is polished up and refurbished to fit in with today. Everywhere one travels through the country, it breathes in one breath of progress and Trujillo. This applies not alone to such concrete things as government buildings, but to such less tangible fields as public health, social security, education, scientific progress.

How much of this has been accomplished at the sacrifice of individual liberty? Certainly only a tremendously strong personality could initiate so much progress in a country in so short a time. But personality is not enough to charm the populace for nearly two decades. Trujillo holds power in order to wield power, and he has not held his people in line wholly with daisy chains.

It was but natural that we should wish to meet the man responsible for Dominican progress. An audience was not difficult to secure. When we were ushered into his presence in a temporary office near the hotel he was hard at work. Without the assistance of an interpreter, or the presence of a secretary, we talked with him alone in his language, Spanish. He seemed to both Gladys and myself a dynamic, hard working, American-type businessman. He took our praises of his accomplishments with that impeccable graciousness for which all Dominicans are noted, and seemed to be concerned with not having accomplished more.

But for all the modernization the president has brought to Trujillo City, it boasts, too, of the oldest historical sites in the Western hemisphere. On the north coast near Puerto Plata is the site of the first settlement by white man in the New World, founded by the Great Navigator himself, which he called La Isabela in honor of his queen. This was the capital of the New World until 1496, when Columbus' brother moved it to Santo Domingo, now Trujillo City. This city, most modern capital of the Caribbean, is the oldest city of the New World. It was from historic Santo Domingo that the great Spanish conquerors set out on their adventurous conquests that eventually opened up the entire New World. Diego Velásquez sailed from here to conquer Cuba. Hernán Cortez and

Pizarro walked these streets. Ponce de León set out from here on his quest for the Fountain of Youth and found Florida instead. De Soto once lived here. Bartolomé de la Casas, apostle of the Indians of Mexico, practiced law here. Here in the Columbus cathedral are the bones of the Great Admiral himself. Near the port you can walk through the very rooms where Diego Columbus, son of the admiral, lived and held court. Here during his viceroyalty he and his wife held the most brilliant court of Spanish nobles and ladies that ever came to the New World. Here too is Santo Domingo University, the oldest educational institution in the western hemisphere and still a going concern. Scattered over the city are picturesque ruins of many old convents and ancient churches. So many places in Latin America are described as representing a great contrast between old and new, but Trujillo City is the acme of contrast between the very oldest and the very newest in the whole New World today.

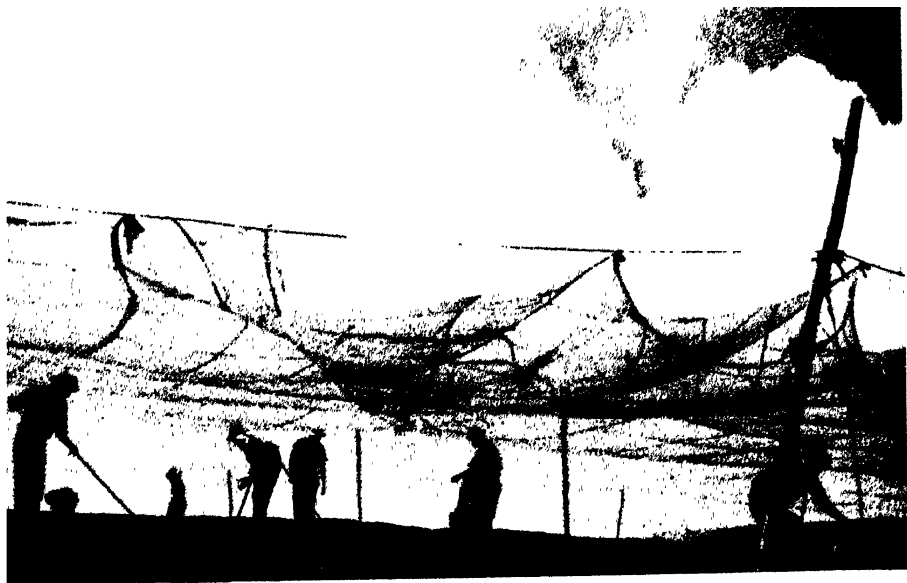
We made several one-day excursions out of Trujillo City. There are very interesting beaches along the coast in either direction, white beaches gently sloping into the blue waters of the Caribbean, always shaded by graceful coconut palms leaning into the wind. Such a beach is Haina, where to add to the romantic atmosphere there are the ruined walls of an old Spanish fort, only a few miles out of the capital. Boca Chica, some little distance farther, has become quite a beach resort, with amusements and refreshment stands and a sizeable colony of summer homes.

There are also drives into the country and hills outside of Trujillo City. One, called La Toma, is a series of mountain springs and cascades. It has several natural swimming pools and the vegetation around it is the dense tropical rain forest type. La Toma joins one end of President Trujillo's farm, Hacienda Fundación, and is quite a popular picnic spot as well as being much patronized for swimming. We entered La Toma through the arched gateway of the Hacienda Fundación, and were impressed by the eucalyptus-lined driveway that led us across a part of the president's farm. A soldier was stationed on guard at the gate, but traffic of every sort was allowed through freely.

The main part of Hacienda Fundación is in the section of San Cristobal.



Fanguito slums outside of San Juan, where shacks stand on the mud of the back bay



Puerto Rico's tobacco is nurtured from such seed beds as these near Caguas

Bread is sold in yard-long loaves in the market at Ponce





The country around Yauco is famous for its coffee



Bred Gade, a street of St. Thomas, V. I., preserves its quaint Danish atmosphere

Though the president lives in Trujillo City, he spends every week end on this farm, covering it thoroughly on horseback. He specializes in fine cattle and has an excellent herd, giving away every day three thousand bottles of milk taken from his cows by soldiers of the republic. With permission one may wander unrestrictedly over Hacienda Fundación and swim at La Toma, and on week ends in all likelihood visitors to the place will see the president going about on horseback.

While in the capital we made the acquaintance of Luis Mendez and his fascinating family. Sr. Mendez had been consul-general for the Dominican Republic in New York, and his teen-age daughters had gone to school there, so to a great extent they seemed like folks from home. He held a position of some prominence in the protocol office of the department of foreign affairs and seemed to know everyone who mattered in the republic. He did much during our stay to smooth things out for us, and we asked his three daughters to come along on one of our trips out of the capital.

This was the trip to San Pedro de Macoris, one of our first get-acquainted trips in the Dominican Republic. Our route led across the Ozama River on which Trujillo City is located, to the adjacent town or suburb of Duarte, and thence out into open country. For the most part the terrain was flat, through miles of sugar cane. This, incidentally, is the principal crop of the country. The pavement was asphalt and we made fairly good time over it, even with occasional stops for photographing.

Most of the peasants' homes along the way were of frame with roofs of corrugated sheet iron, and were often painted in most brilliant colors. Palms, particularly royal palms, and a few tropical pines added interest and altitude to the flat scenery along the way. Breaking the monotonous miles of cane were occasional fields of corn and bananas. Now and then we passed an estate or dairy farm. From time to time a *flamboyant*, found nearly everywhere in the moist parts of the tropics, added its dash of vivid red.

But most interesting to us at least were the many roadside shrines. We had seen these in other countries, especially Cuba, but never to the ex-

tent that we found them here in the Dominican Republic. These shrines are dedicated to various saints, but the majority were to the Virgin of Alta Gracia, the patron saint of the country.

Generally these shrines consisted of an enclosure of frame or masonry, containing the effigy of the saint. Invariably there were vases of flowers or stubs of candles burned as offerings by passing worshippers. Perhaps our attention was more drawn to highway shrines in this country because of the extent to which they were patronized during our stay here. Later on, when we got up into the recently earthquake-stricken zone on the north coast, we met with whole processions of people along the highways going from shrine to shrine and imploring the aid of the various saints in protection against further earthquakes. Even along this road to Macoris, in the south of the country, we met worshippers kneeling at the shrines or placing flowers or lighted candles before the glass-enclosed figure. From the Mendez girls we learned that these shrines were generally erected by different individuals or sometimes by a group of the faithful. Frequently, however, an individual would construct such a shrine at his own expense either in gratitude for the blessing believed to have been received from a certain saint or in memory to some beloved deceased.

The trip out to Macoris was made on Sunday, and we met more than the usual numbers of people along the way. Most of them were well dressed. The people of this country, even the poorest, appeared to be much better off than corresponding classes in Haiti. Here practically all wore shoes and generally were neatly and cleanly dressed even if but country peasants. At a crossroads store we drove up to the rail beside a few saddle horses, to go in and listen awhile to the lively native *meringue* music. The passenger buses along the way were crowded with well-dressed people of all classes going into the country for a holiday or to visit with friends and relations. Along the road local vendors had set up shop in the shade to sell fruits or mounds of sugar-cane candy to passersby. On the other side of the modern steel bridge across the Higuamo River, Gladys and I stopped to sample some of these sweet wares from an old lady sitting in the shade of a tree behind a table.

While we took our leisurely time, the Mendez girls gathered a supply of ripened guava fruit from the bushes growing wild in an adjacent field.

Shortly before arriving at Macoris we met a long religious procession coming along the road to a shrine, the participants bearing religious banners, crosses, and saints' pictures and chanting in Spanish the hymn, *St. Joseph, Hear Me While I Pray*.

We found Macoris to be a neat, clean town, like practically every other community in the country, but it was of an older type than many. There was a new athletic field at the edge of the town, but the rest of the place looked as if it had been there for some time with little added to it but coats of brilliant paint. There were many horse-drawn carriages drawn up around the main square, carriages of another age with large rear wheels and small front ones, taking the place of taxis. Private cars were somewhat displaced by saddle horses wearing the typical high saddle of the country. Monuments to the great patriots of the republic shared space in the central plaza with a fine monument to the living Trujillo. But this last was scarcely a distinctive feature; there is a statue of Trujillo in virtually every town, and a great many of them in the capital. Macoris was interesting but not particularly photogenic, and after a brief turn about the town we wandered along the docks, stopped for a bite to eat in a country store that greatly reminded us of home, and then piled into the car and headed back.

It was still early, and we stopped for a bit on our return trip at Boca Chica, a well-known beach resort crowded with Sunday holiday-makers. Here again but for the language was a spot such as we might have found back home. There was nothing at all obsolete about the bathing suit creations we saw. Girls and fellows in the latest styles strolled on the beach, disported in the water, or talked over a Cola at a table. Couples in street clothes equally up to the minute danced to the music of a small orchestra in the open air pavilion. Now and then a group got together to join in singing, with a guitar-playing member to lead the melody. Feminine style and pulchritude averaged somewhat higher than we would find in a similar beach scene at home.

Despite the outward symbols of modernity that we saw everywhere,

an episode at the Mendez home on our return reflected the sway of gracious old customs, particularly in family relationships. All three of the Mendez girls had been educated in part at least in the United States, and certainly would be less inclined than most to hold to the old customs. Yet as we entered the door of their home and they were met by their father, each approached him with the words, "*Tu bendicion, papa*" (your benediction, papa). To each Luis replied, "*Dios te bendiga*" (may God bless you). We were told that this custom is general and is adhered to even after marriage. Even middle-aged sons and daughters with families of their own salute their parents in the same manner.

It was definitely a great advantage to have someone like Luis Mendez to help us get around. With his aid we accomplished so much more in less time and with less effort than we could have accomplished on our own. For example, on another Sunday he took us to Haina Beach and Guibia Beach in the morning, a cockfight just after noon, the race track later in the afternoon, and a political rally and dance in the evening, not to mention a few stops to visit people on the way between each. Sunday is a big day for these people; they have, like us, made it a holiday of some proportions. Since so much takes place on Sunday and there was only the normal complement of Sundays in our month's stay there, we felt obliged to avail ourselves of every minute of them.

Cockfighting in the Dominican Republic is a lot like cockfighting in all the Caribbean countries. It was largely a repetition of what we had seen in Cuba. The sawdust pit with its concentric rings of seats, the preliminaries of challenging and weighing in, and the pandemonium of betting during the fight, all had by now a rather familiar ring. Fights usually become endurance contests after the first furious moments. To the casual spectator, when you've seen one you've seen 'em all. So we left early in order to be on time for the beginning of the horse races.

But horse racing has a greater degree of uniformity by far all over the world than cockfighting has in Latin America. We were struck, in fact, by a feeling that we had been here before. The same oval track, the same big grandstand with windows cut into it for pari-mutuel betting, even the latest automatic starting apparatus pulled into place before each

race. But to the vociferous enthusiasm of the crowd there may have been added just a little typical Latin emphasis.

It was at the evening's political rally and the dance that followed it that we really first got in touch with the Dominican rank and file. This was held in a workers' suburb just outside of the capital. Alternate speeches and band concerts had been going on for most of the afternoon before we arrived. The crowd was standing or sitting in the open before the balcony of a frame building in an attractive rustic grove. It was bedecked with Dominican flags, with the band at one end of the balcony and the local dignitaries and speakers at the other. As we arrived, an attractive young lady on the rostrum before the microphone was delivering fulsome eulogies of President Trujillo, after each of which the crowd broke into loud acclaim. Her talk, as with the others that followed later, was followed by a rendition by the band which played dance music or national songs, including the national anthem. It was in form and spirit a replica of an old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration such as I used to enjoy so greatly as a boy.

The dancing after the speeches was limited at first to the lower floor of the small building which had served as platform and band stand. But this area couldn't begin to contain the crowd that wanted to participate, so dancing broke out all over the place with hard-packed earth as a dance floor. Luis invited Gladys to dance with him, leaving me to my own devices. As a visiting fireman, cameraman, and writer, I was able to gather about me a bevy of admirers schooled in the conduct proper to the situation by having rehearsed for the afternoon on eulogies to the president. I recognized in the group the little brunette who had been engaged in the stirring political speech as we arrived, and I asked her to dance.

This was sheer trickery. It was a hot, sultry day, unfit for dancing. The uneven ground and the dust stirred up by the crowd added little to the occasion. The lively and unfamiliar two-fourths time of the native *meringue* would have required all of my energy and concentration, but the dance-lot was so densely packed that I had ample opportunity while awaiting the next place to move to stand and talk.

I learned from my pretty partner that she was a teacher in a near-by country school, that she was but seventeen, that she was a member of the Dominican party. This is practically the only organized political party of the country. She told me too that her speech had been entirely written out for her. I congratulated her on her delivery and told her how fine I thought it was that Dominican women like herself were so interested in public affairs.

I caught an occasional glimpse of Gladys in the dense throng, and she too was entering into the spirit of the affair. Luis had introduced her to other friends, and they were making the most of the opportunity to dance with a *gringa*. But after about so much of this, I suspected from my feelings and Gladys' look of dogged determination that we were running down faster than these folks who were more accustomed to struggle in the sun.

We were both casting about for a graceful exit that wouldn't expose our sad physical condition or offend all our new-found friends, when Mother Nature intervened. One of those sudden tropical showers sneaked up on the party, and in a small portion of a moment everyone was making a mad dash for cover. In our case, the car was the most logical shelter, and once we were in it was easy to think of driving home. We were sorry, in a way, to find such a ready way out. Both Gladys and I recall more fondly our afternoon at this country rally and the ready friendship of Dominican everyday folk than we recall formal dances later in the luxurious ballroom of the Jaragua Hotel in the company of the smartly dressed élite of Dominican society.

CHAPTER X

"No Fairer Land Under Heaven"

To the unpracticed or unbiased eye, it began to look as if we were set on settling in Trujillo City and had quite forgotten our original grand project of covering each land thoroughly by road. Actually, every minute of our time there, over and above the actual hours spent in short one-day jaunts out of the capital, was given over to constant and detailed planning for the big jaunt ahead. We were trying particularly to arrange for Luis Mendez to go along with us, and trying to keep his enthusiasm for the trip at proper pitch. After all, he had already seen the Dominican Republic. But we knew that if he could and would accompany us we should see more, get into more places, and make more contacts.

Luis Mendez helped us lay out the trip tentatively. Straight across the country to the north coast, to the region recently stricken by earthquakes—that took care of objective number one in fine shape, and with something different to show for it at the end. West to the Haitian border. South across the interior, following the Haitian border. East along the southern coast, and back to Trujillo City. Added to the other short trips we had made, this would give us a look at every nook and cranny of the country. Luis said it was a nicely planned trip, a trip with everything. Then he said he would go along.

Even with outside help in planning, our island coverage seemed to be falling into a pattern, not only in the matter of routine adherence to sequence of compass points, but even in physical geography. Out of the capital across level farm lands, through fields of cane and corn, past miles of bananas. You can't talk about the West Indies for long anywhere without another reference to palms to give the picture something

in the way of ups and downs, and abundant bougainvillia to give it color until you come to another *flamboyan*, and grimy charcoal sheds along the way to furnish the country's only fuel and give the picture proper shading. An occasional open-air meat market gave the picture both body and redolence. The peasant huts along the way were made of wood, but they were still peasant huts, and still brightly painted, though here and there we came upon rustic little shanties that were walled up with the boardlike husks that drop off of the royal palm.

Then, as on other occasions, we began to run out of the rich agricultural hinterland on which every capital city feeds, and wound up into the foothills through rolling grasslands and—on the landward side of every mountain—lands too dry for grass. The dry side of the slope is always a scratchy place, covered with thorny *campeche* brush. As we gained in altitude the contrast between the wet and the dry sides of every mountain was a bit more marked. Jungle and grassland gave way to pines on the wet side; *campeche* brush yielded to the much more attractive cactus on the dry side of each major slope.

Of course there were people there, too. Carts and pack trains bound for market, dust-raising modern buses, and herds of market-bound cattle pounding the dust back into place again. A horseman bringing up the rear of a little herd had a newborn calf, too wobbly to keep up with its mother, draped across the saddle. Now and then, the raucous squawk of a wild parrot from brush or jungle-clad roadside added something in the way of exotic sound effect.

At the top of the grade beyond the Haina River Valley we paused for pictures at an unusually ornate wayside shrine in colored tile, to which, as we watched, a woman came up to kneel and pray. Though it was the shrine that caught our eye, a barracks of the national guard kept a colder eye on the sweeping valley scene than did the image of the Virgin of Alta Gracia in the colorful shrine. This spot was on the boundary between two provinces, and at such places a military establishment is nearly always found.

But even here, in the backwoods, the firmest of New World governments was more than an iron hand. This is perhaps the secret of that

government's success: the omnipresent army and omniscient police make Dominicans toe the line, but worthwhile merits are passed out for good conduct. In the first valley of the next province we found, adjoining the barracks, a center where registered sires were kept for the use of surrounding farms to improve their cattle, horses, hogs. It is a firm government, but with a scientific view, and it is more than probable that these scattered centers of breeding stock do more to improve the blood strains of the republic than the scattered groups of soldiers themselves. Near here too was a distillery for taking oil from the bitter oranges that grew wild in the vicinity, for use in making perfume. We had seen this same sort of distillery in Haiti, but here it was better managed, and had access to scientific government advice and help. An abandoned prisoner of war camp near-by shocked us, so far from the fighting front, until we learned later the enormity of the toll that German submarines had taken off the shore of all these islands.

There were government irrigation projects along the way in the province of Duarte, transforming thorny brushland into excellent farms. Here and there too, high up on the slopes of the wet side of many a mountain, were rising columns of smoke where hardy pioneer stock was carving a home, unaided, out of raw woods.

At San Francisco, capital of the province of Duarte, we came upon our first important signs of the earthquake. Some buildings were merely cracked. Some had upper floors naked to the public view where sections of wall had crumbled. The old masonry church was completely in ruins.

We were now on the country's secondary roads, unpaved but with a good all-weather gravel surface that permitted fair speed. As we came down onto the coastal plain of the north, jungle and brush fell back a bit and farms became more common. Native huts were a trifle cruder than we had found them on the southern side of the country. More streams wandering along the coastal plain on their way to the sea meant more bridges. The recent earthquake meant that most of the bridges were out, and we did bits of rugged detouring precisely where our going should have been easiest. More and more, buildings that had been at all substantially built showed signs of earthquake damage, ruined walls and

walls with gaping cracks, walls propped up with poles. Though the big shake-up was several weeks behind us, there were still slight tremors almost daily. The trouble with slight earthquake tremors is that you never know for sure they *are* slight tremors until they are over, and you never know even then if the slight tremor was a prelude or a finale. People, consequently, were still in a state of no little religious trepidation. We passed several religious processions of considerable size en route to propitiate God at local shrines, bearing crosses and religious banners, chanting entreaties to St. Joseph to protect them from further quakes. Results, in the main, were excellent.

As we came back within sight of the ocean we were headed rather directly for Matanzas, or rather for the site of Matanzas, for the town itself had disappeared in the tidal wave that followed the major shock. Here and there on either side of the road were great pools of water that had rolled inland on that day and hadn't found a way back to the sea. Peasants' huts by the dozens had become only heaps of muddy sticks and rubble. Here and there nature had performed a few of her brutally playful pranks, and we found buildings that had been carried intact from their original sites and deposited in incongruous locations, still preserving some semblance of their original shape. As we came closer to the sea, ruin became more and more complete, and people were huddled together in muddy fields with army pup tents for their only shelter. Oddly enough, the tidal wave that had wiped—or washed—a town off the Dominican map had cost comparatively few lives in proportion to its property damage. People said they had seen the great tidal wave, born in the ocean's depths between here and Puerto Rico, while it was still far out to sea. All but a few had managed to reach the safety of high ground before it struck.

We had to do a bit of back-tracking through San Francisco again to get to the city of Santiago where we were to spend the night. Darkness caught up with us on the way, and at one point we looked down the grade on a long string of twinkling, fluttering lights. As we overtook this, we found it was another long religious procession, a joint petition from two towns to a celebrated shrine. Each person in the procession

carried—in addition to a banner—a saint’s picture, a cross, or a lighted candle. All were singing a monotonous litany-like chant, beseeching protection from further quakes. It was an odd and eerie thing to drive by in the night.

It was late when we reached Santiago, but quarters had been reserved for us at the Hotel Mercedes which were among the finest we found on the whole trip. It was an old place, very much in contrast to the Jaragua Hotel in the capital. It had been built soundly in the Victorian Era, when space was less a luxury than it is today, but had all modern improvements incorporated into it without undue clashing of styles or unseemly damage to its original state, and it was far enough from the earthquake zone to have escaped all damage to its heavy masonry. A sweeping grand stairway, high ceilings with French windows that ran all the way to the top, little private balconies outside each window, made our stay here virtually a night in a palace. Even the “king size” private bathroom of our apartment was larger than many a modern apartment. As we turned to the hotel manager with exclamations of delight, Gladys made the remark that it must be the bridal suite. He smiled and said that *naturally* it was. When he left, Luis Mendez confessed that he had requested this suite particularly, and that he had stayed here on his honeymoon. He added slyly that he had labored in other places to convey the impression that we were honeymooners, and this explained many little incidents of curious humor on the part of our hosts along the way. All along we had escaped being taken for American tourists as we were, for much of the time, off the beaten tourist track and as both Gladys and I are brunettes and speak Spanish. We were amused to know that after over twenty years of marital bliss we were now taken for newlyweds. After all though, Luis Mendez had to have some small compensation for showing a couple of visiting firemen over paths that lacked novelty for him.

Beyond Santiago we climbed again across the coastal range toward Puerto Plata. It was rugged country, forested country with here and there tiny patches of cleared fields carved out of the woods on slopes so steep we wondered how seeds could be held still on those rugged

slopes long enough to sprout. It was poor country, with the neatly painted frame huts of other sections giving way more and more to cruder, unpainted shacks, their walls made from the great slabs of husks shed by the royal palm. Motor traffic was much thinner now, and there were more overloaded donkeys bearing huge loads of the red pottery of the section, or loaded with much less colorful bales of tobacco. It was up-and-down, wet-and-dry land, with jungle and tree ferns giving way to pines in scenery reminiscent of mountain country back home, with *campeche* brush and grassland, with a girl loaded down with sisal fiber climbing one slope and a boy jogging down the next with a stem of bananas balanced on his head. The oddest sight along the way were huge twin barrels trotting down a grade on dainty little feet. This was the country bread wagon, engulfing a little donkey. Then the mountains fell back again and we were down to sea level once more in the Puerto Plata section, back in cane country. We took time out here to visit the Sosua Settlement, one of the New World's most interesting attempts to lend a hand with Europe's problems.

Back in the late thirties, the problem of Europe's oppressed minorities was receiving in our own land much the same attention that the weather received—everybody talked about it, but nobody did much about it. Finally, in 1940, hazy and wishful talk about finding a refuge for these folk in the sparsely settled sections of the New World was changed to action on one front. A contract was drawn between the Dominican Republic and a resettlement association in New York to settle as many as one hundred thousand displaced persons—mostly Jews—on Dominican soil. President Trujillo played an important part in pushing this measure through, not without some opposition.

The region chosen was a peninsula that enfolded a beautiful bay in the Puerto Plata region, excellent and well-drained land that had formerly been controlled by the United Fruit Company. Known as the Sosua Settlement, it has become one of the most interesting—and disappointing—attempts to render Europeans a hand. It is disappointing because so many of the displaced persons admitted using this opportunity as a stepping stone into the United States, and the grandiose one hun-

dred thousand refugees—after several years at the experiment—make a net total of only six hundred Dominican immigrants.

Those who have tarried and those who have made their way into the United States and found it unrewarding and returned to the Dominican Republic have done not at all badly by themselves or by their adopted country. Lush fields of cane lined the road as we drew near the settlement, and it was obvious that the land the government had offered was as good as any of the raw lands of the country. We were impressed by the neatness of all the buildings, and the excellent standards of sanitation. These people enjoyed a reasonable freedom of opportunity according to their likes and abilities, and while the settlement was largely agricultural, artisans and craftsmen had gathered together in the little settlement of Batey. There was a predominance of Southern California Mission architecture, although many of the buildings were frame and in the style of the country.

Again the indispensable Luis Mendez knew the right person to see. He introduced us to Mr. Baum, a former newspaperman who was now social manager of the project. Mr. Baum was extremely helpful and gave freely of his time to show us about and to explain the workings of the development to us. Though each settler was free to engage in any individual enterprise, many of the community enterprises were run co-operatively. Among these were a few stores, a restaurant, hospital, clinic, school, and a fine little hotel on a hill overlooking the bay.

The association lent aid to anyone interested in starting out in business for himself, particularly along agricultural lines. Dairying and diversified farming were encouraged above all else, as there was excellent opportunity for disposing of butter, cheese, and meat products, which are at a premium in the Dominican Republic. There has always been a lack of knowledge and experience along these lines among Dominicans themselves. Each farmer also has a small truck patch for raising his own vegetables. Many of the people engaged in these activities are relatively inexperienced, having come from cities in Europe, but they are given every assistance and much expert advice by the government and the association. They were all cheerful folk, more than willing to forget

their native lands and eager to cast in their lot with the New World. This was easy to understand when we learned that some were "graduates" of Nazi concentration camps.

Though Mr. Baum was enthusiastic about the whole project, he was frank in giving us negative or unfavorable information. He pointed out that the two-to-one preponderance of men over women immigrants presented social problems that were aggravated further by differences in language and background of the immigrants and of the Dominicans. Some of the men had married Dominican women, and over eighty children of Dominican nationality had been born to Sosua's settlers. Though some of these marriages were happy, Mr. Baum felt that for the most part it was necessary for the community to nurture its own social and cultural life. With few exceptions they couldn't marry into the better Dominican families, and they were accustomed to too high a standard to mix well with the lower levels. For the most part these European immigrants represented a better middle class that is as yet all too small in so predominantly an agricultural country as the Dominican Republic. Given time and more experience, the community promises much not only for its own betterment but for improving the country as a whole. Such projects as a successful citronella oil development, for example, help to build up the country's exports, creating a favorable trade balance which helps the country to bring in more necessities and luxuries to raise the general standard of living.

Speaking of raising standards, while Mr. Baum was giving us the general picture of the project, we were storing away a combination breakfast and lunch at the hotel on the hill that was quite exceptional, considering the place. Bacon and eggs, like home. Locally raised fried potatoes. Generous slabs of good butter. Ice cold glasses of good milk. Home-made bread. It was particularly the good butter and milk that were definitely out of this—the Caribbean—world.

The Sosua Settlement trip, too, was something of a side trip. We had to return to Santiago again to continue our jaunt along the north coast, through the rolling foothills that fringed the coastal plain. This was tobacco country, with great and small tobacco sheds along the

way. Mingled with these were charcoal sheds where the country's fuel was stored when first brought down from the hills. Beyond Navariete this gave way to desert, with the desert yielding to irrigation in a rather extensive terrain. There wasn't much middle ground here; land was either cactus-covered or flooded for growing rice, as rice growing has been advanced greatly here in just the last few years. An astonishingly modern mill for handling harvested rice was one of the finest works of the government in this section.

Because of the dryness of the air, there was considerable drying of meat through here. But the unpleasant smell of a meat-drying yard was usually subdued by the rich aroma of roasting coffee. Coffee is an important item in the Dominican Republic, and through this region everyone bought his coffee green and roasted it at home as needed.

Our road left the hills for the last time on this north coast and headed for the ocean again, to the port of Monte Cristi. It was a mean little port, full of low frame buildings with smoking-hot, corrugated sheet iron roofs, full of boredom and listlessness, violently full of a pink stucco postoffice and federal building that stood out in that drab town like a bruised thumb. Other than this, the main mark of its importance was a long pier running far out from the shallow shore, in a terrain so flat that much of the shoreland is given over to evaporating salt from sea water. The town itself is crowded up close to the Haitian border, but due east of it is the miserable little fishing village of La Isabela, on a low spit of land that runs out a bit to sea. It is a drab spot, too tired to dream, but what dreams it might have if it were but alive! For La Isabela was the first white settlement in the New World, established by Columbus on his second voyage. Here the first church was built, the first city council established. Here was Spain's New World capital for four years, until the seat of government was transferred to Santo Domingo—now Trujillo City—when gold was discovered there.

It is a bit hard to understand how Columbus could have become so enamored of this part of his discoveries as to refer to this section in glowing terms to his king, stating that “there is no fairer land than this under heaven.” There was little that we saw in all the Caribbean trip

that was as drab and dreary, as inert, as lacking in all the essence of hope and dreams.

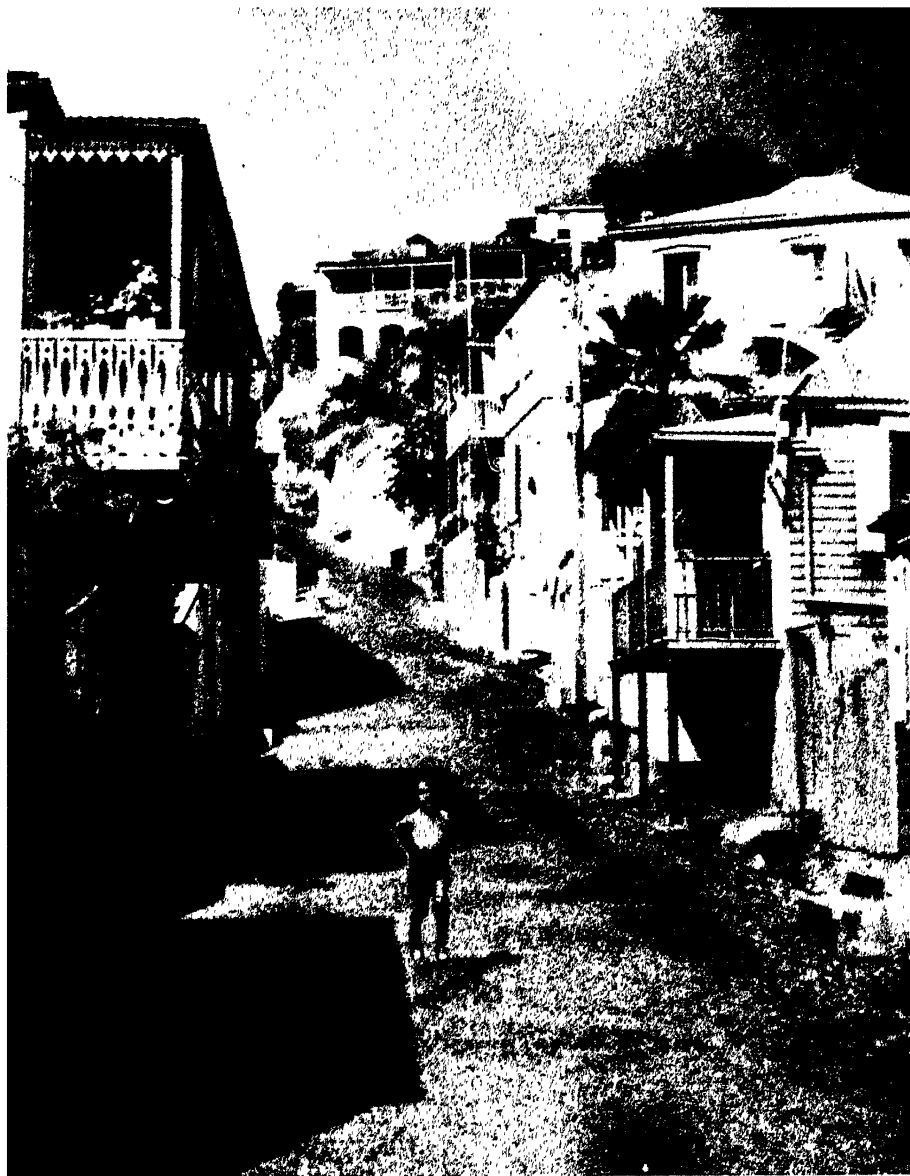
There was one nice feature about Monte Cristi, though. Here we rounded first base. We had come to the northwestern corner of the Dominican Republic, and here we headed south along the Haitian border, bound for the village of Dajabon. As far as the physical geography of the section is concerned, this is only some of Haiti that lapped over, but in the lower settled regions there was a world of difference. There were, before we hit the mountains, rich fields of rice and cane under irrigation. We could not help but note the difference that efficient government can make to a land. Scarcity of capital and a Spanish indisposition toward long-term capital investment makes development of such country fall largely on the government.

Dajabon itself was somewhat comparable to our first Dominican town of Elias Pina to the south. It was startlingly spic and span and amazingly modernized for a border town. There was nothing to remind us that but a few years ago this had been a blood-stained border hot spot. Here in 1937 some thousands of Haitians, squatters on Dominican soil had been slaughtered. It is unfortunate that three million Haitians are crowded into one-third of this land, while two million Dominicans have plenty of room in the balance. It is likewise unfortunate that a weak Haitian government for over a century has been at all times unable to develop its resources as the Dominican Republic has done. The fact that the darkest and one of the whitest of Caribbean nations share the same little island has added much to their difficulties, though the memory of old bloodshed has faded away and a clear-cut policy and clearly marked border enable the two nations now to live in peace. Today an international highway along this frontier is policed and maintained in common by both countries.

Beyond the agricultural development of the coastal section, the mountainous region of the interior was as wild and unsettled in the Dominican Republic as it was in Haiti. The hills were forest-covered and untouched by an axe. The valleys, as in Haiti, were filled up with countryfolk. Each little hut had its own small garden patch, with papayas to be had



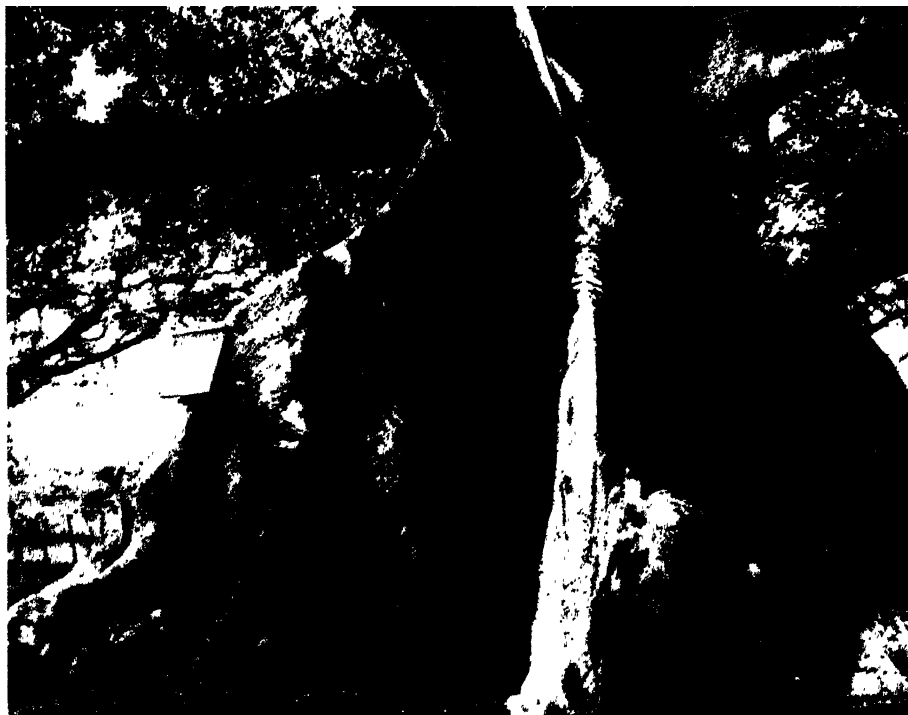
A suburb of Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, is Frenchtown where the women still wear Norman French dress and practice the handicrafts of their ancestors



Crystal Gade, an old-world street of Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas



*Roaring River Falls on the north coast illustrates original Indian meaning of
Jamaica—land of many waters*



The famous huge silk-cotton tree near Spanish Town, Jamaica

Governor's house, Port of Spain, seat of British authority in Trinidad



for the picking, with breadfruit to be had only for waiting until it dropped, with the starchy root of the *malanga*—Elephant Ear—and the *cassava* to supplant our own potatoes.

It was already late afternoon when we reached Dajabon, and later still when we had looked it over, so Luis Mendez telegraphed ahead to the army post at Loma de Cabrera for quarters for the night. It was a night of memorable hospitality in cramped quarters. Naturally a back country army post had little enough to offer to travelers, and especially to a woman traveler, in the way of accommodations. But when we arrived we learned that an officer who maintained a home near the barracks had gone to the capital on business, and his wife, Señora Sanchez, said she would be honored to have the American couple put up in her room for the night. She said further that she was expecting us for the evening meal.

It was a homelike night away from home. Señora Sanchez was a typical housewife of the better middle class, and but for her language and her deep brunette coloring she might well have passed for an American woman of the same position. She chatted along with us and with the officer in charge while she went about preparations for the evening meal. Feeling honored by the occasion, the officer in charge produced a bottle of fine brandy and insisted that he treat us all and give the dinner something of an unneeded lift.

As is usual in many places among our neighbor republics, the electric light plant was temporarily broken down, so we dined by the flickering light of a few candles and a lantern. We and the food strained dining room facilities to the utmost. We felt, too, that Señora Sanchez delved too deeply into her precious stock of imported canned goods. She had prepared an excellent dinner of local foods, but she had added to this canned ham to go with the home-grown eggs, canned peas, canned vegetable soup, olives, raisin cookies, followed by coffee and crackers and cheese. The perimeter of the dining room table was much more crowded when we were finished. The menfolk managed to polish off the bottle of brandy, whereupon we smoked and chatted for a pleasant hour before Señora Sanchez ushered Gladys and me to our room for the night.

The outdoors is so easy to live in to the south that as a rule houses are small. Our bedroom was a trifle crowded with twin beds draped with mosquito bar, even with all the possessions of the Sanchez family shoved well to the side to make room for our luggage. By the dim light of the lantern Gladys and I were constantly bumping into the sword, scabbard, and belt of the absent Lieutenant Sanchez as we prepared for the night. Such wall space as was not covered by his military accoutrements was well taken care of by pictures ranging from home-like scenes and patron saints to the big picture of President Trujillo which is prominent in most Dominican houses. But, once in bed, with the light out and with the mosquito netting well tucked in about each bed, we settled down to a comfortable night after a hard day's travel.

We were up before daylight when a lantern borne aloft on the seemingly disembodied arm of a soldier came into our dark room. We were ready to leave at dawn, as we had a hard day ahead of us. We waited only for a cup of hot coffee, planning to stop for breakfast at Restauracion a few miles ahead. When we left, Señora Sanchez told Gladys with quiet pride, "You know, you are the first foreign lady ever to spend the night at this army post?"

Restauracion was only another rambling village, remarkable chiefly for its roadside advertising. Even before we saw the town itself we saw the great white sign painted on the rocky wall above it, *Dios y Trujillo* (God and Trujillo). These signs are common, and the president is invariably given second billing. In the town square a sign over a fine new fountain announced *Trujillo nos da agua* (Trujillo gives us water). The little jobs he takes care of by himself.

Though we spent another night on the road in order to have ample time for photography, there is little point in a recitation of the return to the capital. The Artibonite Valley, when we crossed it, looked little different physically than it had in Haiti. At Elias Pina we came back onto the highway over which we had first traveled to the capital when we came in from Haiti, and it was merely more uncomfortable by day. San Juan looked brighter under full sunlight than it had looked under

the illumination of an electric plant that had been but half functioning before. Trujillo City and the Jaragua Hotel look good at any time.

That, as far as highway coverage was concerned, took care of the Dominican Republic, up and down, sidewise and crosswise. There had been no grief in it. There was but one thing left, to get the car over the bounding main again to Puerto Rico. There was no grief in that, either. It was the easiest thing we did all summer, and it brought us in contact with an interesting man, Charles McLaughlin.

McLaughlin had been an American marine during the occupation of the republic. He had a friend in the Dominican National Guard, a young lieutenant named Trujillo, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. So after the occupation McLaughlin went home and Trujillo stayed home and became a general. Then he became a president, in 1930. Then the hurricane struck, and Trujillo wired Washington for the services of his former commanding officer, Major Thomas Wood, in rebuilding the place. McLaughlin drifted back. He took a job with the *Naviera Dominicana*, keeping the ships moving. He did so well at it that in time he became *Naviera Dominicana*. McLaughlin is the product of a good old American success formula, with Latin overtones. Play fair. Work hard. Be good to lieutenants. You never can tell.

McLaughlin was a gold mine of information on the Dominican Republic, especially during the war years. Newspapers during the war, of course, let this part of the world sedulously alone for security reasons. German submarines were less considerate. They sank three of *Naviera Dominicana's* best ships, and even with government escort for the rest and an intensive burst of wooden shipbuilding, for a time things were bad. Puerto Rico, dependent to a great extent on this shipping, was perilously close to a period of belt-tightening, and Puerto Rico is never overfed at best.

With peace, the Dominican Republic had held the place of importance it took over to a large extent from the United States as a supplier of Puerto Rico's tables, particularly in supplying meat. Fast and sturdy diesel-powered craft with refrigerated holds carry this trade on regular schedules, and McLaughlin made it easy for us to get the

Willys aboard one of these, though the Willys was accustomed to heat and rode on the deck.

We would fly across, of course, so this left us with a bit of time on our hands—time which I spent in one of the most interesting and photogenic experiences of the summer. I wanted, naturally, pictures of Trujillo Peak, the highest point in the West Indies, as well as something on Lake Enriquillo, below sea level. These two points, close to each other and near the Haitian border, are hard to get to by car except in the dry season, and are not at all an easy trip even then. When I spoke about this to some of the army men, I received a most generous offer from them. They would have an army pilot take me on a photo-reconnaissance trip by plane over these two spots. This offer fitted nicely into the extra time we had.

Until I was signed, sealed, and delivered at the airport, I didn't know that the Vultee plane in which I was to ride had been through a war, had been on the front lines, had been turned out to pasture here. Dominican air over the mountains, I learned, is a rocky pasture for an old plane. The pilot, Lieutenant Perez, came highly recommended and looked better than the plane. He wasn't nearly so noisy either.

When you get an army to doing personal favors, you almost have to play their way. They insisted on a parachute. When I got this on, and draped a Leica, a movie camera, and another still camera over its webs, and when I eased myself and all this down into the narrow bucket seat, I hoped sincerely that I would never have to climb out of there in a hurry. But first I must be instructed with the parachute. Here is the ring, which I am to pull after—and if—I jumped.

"And I count the usual *one-two-three*?" I asked, not wishing anyone to think this was the first time I ever wore a chute.

Lieutenant Perez shrugged deprecatingly. "But of course I am telling you unnecessary things. I forget that in your country even every little kid reads of these matters in magazines."

That's when it came time for me to ease all this and me too into that seat. It was a tight fit. How I would ever combine photographing with flying in those cramped quarters was clearly going to be something

of a problem. I managed finally to take off my movie camera and lay it with some extra rolls of film on the troughlike track on which the bucket seat rested. Then I heard the control tower signals coming over the phone and we began to pick up speed as we rolled down the runway. Before I knew it we were airborne and the ground was dropping away under us. The cool air rushed delightfully over my perspiring face and I leaned back to enjoy the glorious adventure. Cameras, straps, and webbing kept me from leaning back too far, kept the adventure from feeling too glorious.

We were circling over the city now. How neat and regular it looked from the air! There was the harbor below with the ships tied to the docks, the warehouses, the checkerboard pattern of streets with gleaming white buildings. There stood out the startling white of the new palace of justice, the intricate pattern of Ramfis Park with its large wading pool for children. The pilot, seeing me banging away with all cameras, brought the plane lower over the city so I could pick up in the camera viewfinder the cathedral, the stone ruins of the home of Diego Columbus, the new presidential palace under construction. I grinned with satisfaction at Perez when he looked back at me and gave him the sign that I had enough. He banked the plane in a sharp curve and struck off west over the southern coast, giving me the opportunity to pick up a fine air shot of the startling white Hotel Jaragua as he banked around it several times at low altitude.

Now we leveled off for the last time and cut inland. I photographed plenty of the countryside and especially the ribbon of highway by which we had twice traveled across country. The flat patches of green cultivated land of the coastal plain gave place to low rounded hills which became steeper and steeper as we headed directly inland toward the mountains. Rapidly they rose sheer up before us. I felt my seat pushed up against me and I knew we were rising rapidly. A glance at the altimeter verified this as the needle seemed to jump by hundreds of feet at a time through the thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand markings and on up. The plane was climbing by steps, each of which I could perceptibly feel as I alternately got heavier and

lighter in my seat. Even then I thought those mountains were looming up dangerously. I could not believe they were the same ones we had looked at from the ground, they rose so steeply. From the ground the greater part of their height is covered by foothills. Upward draughts of air caught us now and shook us up. The earphones suddenly went out. I could neither hear Perez nor make myself heard. If only science could do as much for that deafening old motor!

Then science did. The old motor spat and sputtered a couple of times, then held its breath for a slow count. I shivered a little but decided it was only from the chill at that altitude. Couldn't be from fear. I looked over the side. Nothing to be afraid of there—big old patchwork crazyquilt of green velvet, draped over soft, overstuffed hills. A man could drop onto that and bounce without a chute, and go back and do it again for fun.

The motor picked up the thread of its melody again—it sounded sweeter now—and went on about its business. I kept on trying to throw a scare into myself, just for the thrill of it. "Seriously now, Herb," I said, "what if you did have to use this chute and it didn't work, or you didn't work it right?"

I got no answer. What can you do with a guy like that, who won't talk back to himself? The phones were still out, so Perez couldn't answer me, either. Then common sense took control of the situation. I looked over what I wore. A chute pack, with webbing to match, three cameras and straps to match them. I was the best-wrapped package ever shipped by plane. Shucks, if the chute didn't work, and if only I could avoid hitting first with my head or feet, I could take it whether the chute worked or not. There was only one catch. I had no shoehorn, to pry myself out of that bucket seat if ever I did want to leave that plane in a hurry.

Perez looked back, motioned over to the right. Mountain peaks had punched holes through the clouds. I nodded. "Fine sight," I shouted, but made no motion with the cameras.

"No." He shook his head, signaled again. He formed a peak with

his finger tips, and raised them up high—high. Then I caught on. That was Trujillo Peak right beside us.

I guess I was expecting too much. It was the highest peak in the West Indies, but after all that meant only ten thousand feet. It had a rounded top, which detracted from its dignity. I got in a few shots of it, but it was too cloud-covered. Perez squirmed and dodged around with the plane, trying to find an open spot, but it did no good. We would get a fleeting glimpse of the whole mountain, but before I could do a thing about it the clouds would close in. Modest old Mt. Trujillo! It just wouldn't uncover.

We gave up, went “downstairs” a few thousand feet, and wandered off, simulating lack of interest. I knew from the direction we were headed that Perez had decided to go on to Lake Enriquillo, the republic's section below sea level.

On the way we passed over the town of Azua. I had told Perez of the fine effects you could get with a camera by corkscrewing down on a village. It gives the audience the same effect as spiraling down in the plane itself. Perez remembered my suggestion and as Azua came into view he looked back to me, pointed below, and made a spiral motion downward with his finger.

Here it comes, I thought, and just about got all set with my movie camera when the horizon disappeared and I was looking straight down over the side of the plane with the town rushing up at me. This was corkscrew with a vengeance. I figured Perez knew what he was doing, and anyway I had no shoehorn. And this was really great movie shooting, so I ground away until with a zoom he leveled off, cleared the housetops and that shot was over. I took the first big breath since we had started down and grinned back with approval at Perez as he looked back questioningly to see how I liked it. Apparently my grin of approval did not betray the sickening effect I had in my stomach.

I guess Perez had been up before. He straightened up to fly right then, for awhile. We just flew and flew, until my stomach became master of the situation again. Meanwhile, the green velvet quilt under us played out, became tattered along the edges, showed bare ground

beneath. Then we got to where the bare ground didn't show even tatters of velvet quilt. This was the Lake Enriquillo country, bare desert with whitish patches of alkali and poisonous patches of water. Then we were over Lake Enriquillo itself, a corrupt green jewel set in whitish rings of alkaline crust. Here we had it all to do over again. More corkscrewing! It wasn't hard to give Perez an idea, but it was hard to take it away from him. This I didn't like so much. If anything had gone wrong back at Azua, we would have been close to the hospital. Here—well, that water didn't look safe to drink nor fit to bathe in.

I thought we were all done when this was over, but Perez scribbled a note and passed it back. We would go back for a final try at Mt. Trujillo. Contrary to the laws of nature in these parts, the clouds had thinned out a bit around the mountain, but it still wasn't good. But Perez wouldn't give up. We squirmed and circled and dodged cloud banks, we twisted and turned and worried away at the problem. One of us gave up and leaned back to enjoy the ride, but Perez wouldn't. He shook his head after each disappointment, but he went back for more.

Then he brightened and pointed excitedly. Our perseverance had rewarded me. We were in a great hole between two cloud banks, and there beside us was Mt. Trujillo, naked from top to bottom. A mountain named Trujillo should be ashamed, but I didn't think about this at the time. I just burned film fast.

When the clouds rolled in and cut off this view, that should have been all for the day. But it wasn't. While Mt. Trujillo had been coyly teasing, greasy black clouds had been ganging up all around us, like a wolf pack. The trip home was not merely a race with an oncoming storm; it was a harried hunt through a maze. You don't plow through cloud banks in the mountains for long, or someday you'll meet up with a cloud bank faced with mountain on the far side. Perez did a lot of squirming to see where he was going. Even then we were nipped from time to time by black thunderheads, and twice we went through something Perez called rain, but which I am sure were lakes floating in the sky.

Finally we got our nose under the storm front and could see home.

Perez turned and blew a contemptuous kiss toward the black storm front. The phones came on again, and I could hear him talking to the control tower. We circled twice and came onto the runway in a landing so perfect that I didn't feel the wheels touch the ground. Hurriedly we piled out of the plane and raced for cover, for one of those airborne lakes had clearance to land on this field right behind us.

I slapped Perez on the back as the deluge slapped the glass of the airport. “*Gran vuelo! Lo hicimos!*” (A great flight! We made it!).

Perez touched fingers to his lips in a Latin gesture. “*Casi no!*” (Almost not).

CHAPTER XI

Puerto Rico, Uncle Sam's Latin Love

Puerto Rico had all of the same things that the other islands of the Caribbean had, but it had more of them. More flowers. More roads. More people. More headaches. More extreme extremes. We did the same things there, but we did them easier and better.

Even our approach was better. We got a preview. The plane picked up Puerto Rico at the northwest corner and flew across it to San Juan, so we had a good look at the map before we hit it. It was a map good to look at, but it didn't look like a map. It was more of a great green carpet with a deep nap, a carpet fringed all the way with a thin white fringe of beach, bordered by a dark thread of coastal road. A rich green nap of endless cane fields with a darker green center of forest-clad slopes, patterned all over with dark threads of a great network of highways, dotted with white tufts of towns. Of course as we looked farther inland we saw dark brown spots where the mountains had rubbed through.

San Juan broke the fantasy, for we had come down too low for the carpet effect, and when we floated over it we couldn't possibly take it for anything but a city. It broke the sensation of novelty too, for we had seen it all before. With endless miles of sea wall and battlement engulfing the city, with a repetitious El Morro jutting out to sea, San Juan was only Little Havana. This was borne out even more when we landed. There were some differences, of course. For one thing, San Juan is located on an island and connected by bridge to the mainland. The modern parts of the city are less engulfed by the ruins of the past as in Havana. The rich parts of Havana are more extensive and more

rich. But the poor parts of San Juan are more extensive and poorer, so the relationship remains about the same.

The contrast between the frontyard and the backyard sides of San Juan are unmatched anywhere. Nestling under the mighty battlement of a mighty Spain, a cyclopean stone wall that stretches from San Juan to San Cristobal, is La Perla—the pearl. La Perla is humanity crowded tier upon tier, in one of the worst slums in the world. You think surely mankind couldn't exist and breed under conditions worse than these. That's what you think. But don't be too sure until you have left the Condado Hotel, Puerto Rico's finest, to ramble through the fine residential district of Santurce, to wander out to the backwaters of the bay through the slums festooned along the stinking waters of El Fanguito. I have no idea what the waters of El Fanguito are composed of—or decomposed of—but clearly H_2O plays but a small part in their chemical make-up, and definitely they are unfit to serve even for flushing away sewage.

But that is touching on the worst first. There is an air about San Juan that is not at all typified by the redolence of El Fanguito. After all, you don't have to look at La Perla, huddled and piled and jammed against an ancient wall; look up at the wall itself and all that goes with it. As we floated over the city, La Perla was only a dark and cluttered spot, all but unnoticed. But the tremendous maze of fortress and battlement that dominates the city was something to raise men's eyes. Again, these things may be outclassed in Havana, but here they make up a bigger comparative part of the city and give an impression of being vaster than Havana's offerings in the same line.

We floated down to earth on the man-made flat of Isla Grande, breezed through customs and immigration offices, and were whisked away by taxi to the Escambrom Beach Club, the only place where we could get quarters at the time in a congested city. At that, it wasn't a bad last resort as it was set on the edge of a palm-shaded beach where at night we were lulled to sleep by the gentle lapping of the ocean waves. Later we moved downtown to the old Palace Hotel to be near

things. It was a nice old hotel, and from it we had an easy time looking over the capital, but it lacked the idyllic setting of the Beach Club.

Looking over San Juan—cleaning up on the capital before we explored the country—was about the only thing we did in Puerto Rico that conformed to our regular pattern for island coverage. Though we couldn't get away from a feeling that we had seen it all in Havana, we couldn't get enough of that stuff. It had something that bigger, more bustling, more modern Havana lacked. After all, Puerto Rico is a bit more away from things than Havana. Its old side preserved a more authentic flavor of the past. It is incrustated with legends that wear away more slowly here far out to sea. There is, for example, *La Garita del Diablo*, the Devil's watchtower. It is only an ancient sentry box, like a thousand sentry boxes decorating Spanish fortifications, but this is a very special box. They say that once upon a time—long, long ago when the New World was young—it was impossible to keep sentries in this box. Even brave ones who would dare the dangers of the spot couldn't be kept on guard here. No, señores, for even the so brave sentries disappeared in the watches of the night, with all mystery. And only for an indication of their fate, whenever a sentry was gone the air was filled with the sharp smell of brimstone. Brimstone, no less, señores! Clearly for some unknown reason of his own, Satan himself was snatching away those brave men, none knows why.

There is San Cristobal, at one end of the great wall that guarded the harbor. Surely San Cristobal is less monumental than the similar sprawling fortification in Havana. But in Havana things have been changed, the old place has been modernized to fit the needs of a modern garrison. In San Cristobal, things have stayed as they were. Its tunnels, moats, ramps, dungeons, and gateways all seemed filled with the very air breathed by men gone centuries ago.

Of course even in Puerto Rico the past has been forced to yield a bit here and there. Over at the other end of the wall running back from the tip of El Morro, is the world's most unusual golf course. Our own Fort Brooke is encompassed by these walls, and lying about it is a golf course where hazards are sea wall, moats, draw-bridges, and ramparts,

to say nothing of the added hazard of the brisk trade winds playing havoc with the trajectory of your ball. What Spanish kings would turn in their graves if they but knew that this costly symbol of their might had been put to such a use! But this interesting and unusual golf course is more than just another fact for Ripley. Can anything convey more clearly the tremendous wealth and might of Spain in her heyday than a golf course within the walls of a ruined Spanish fortification?

Not the least interesting thing about San Juan is the fact that this was Ponce de León's bailiwick. For some reason psychologists might be able to explain, this early settler caught the attention of most of us in grammar school and held a place in our memories better than many a greater man. Ponce de León discovered Florida, but doesn't his most enduring fame rest on his failure to discover the Fountain of Youth? What other of the world's great names in exploration rests so firmly on the feat of *not* discovering?

But back of Florida and the Fountain of Youth there was a training period and a testing ground for Ponce de León, a place to win the right to lead an expedition of discovery and failure. And San Juan was that place. Ponce de León came here on Columbus' second voyage and fell in love with the island. After repeated requests, he was given permission and aid in settling it, and he became its first governor in 1508.

To judge by the evidence, the place—and especially San Juan—fell in love with Ponce de León too. The island's second city, Ponce, was named for him. San Juan itself bristles with monuments to his memory. A bronze statue of him looks down on a plaza named for him. His bones repose in the cathedral here. The main avenue of the city is Ponce de León Avenue. The famed baths of Coamo are known speciously as Ponce de León's Fountain of Youth. Casa Blanca, official residence of the American commanding officer of the island, was once his home.

The Fortaleza, the governor's official residence, is connected with the Casa Blanca by a terrace. Originally it was wholly a fortress, antedating even El Morro. But not long after it was built it was improved and modified, and it has been the governor's residence ever since the time of

Ponce de León, whose successor was the first to occupy it. It is open to visitors, who are shown through it freely from the tower to the vault beneath in which treasure was stored from time to time for safety from pirates. Sir Francis Drake in 1595, before the Fortaleza was finished, launched a foolhardy attack on the city as he had heard that a Spanish treasure fleet had taken refuge from a hurricane here. At this time gold ingots to the value of over two million pesos were stored in the vault until the attack was fought off. This, incidentally, was Drake's last battle.

In times past subterranean tunnels formed secret exits without the city walls or entrances into El Morro, but these have long since been filled in. All in all, from tower to tunnel the Fortaleza is an impressive place. It is a spot of high contrast too, for its broad terraces and tiled promenades, its garden patios and its balconies, belong to a more gracious and spacious age. But it faces on busy, commercial Allen Street. The sharp transition from Fortaleza to bustling, noisy Allen Street or vice versa is always a shock.

The old part of San Juan, the island city, is connected with the island by a causeway. It is on the mainland that the most modern part of the city is growing up. Here too is the American Suburb of Santurce. For the most part, the portion of the city on the mainland is more modern, richer and whiter.

It might be well to add at this point that Puerto Rico is the whitest of the Caribbean islands, though when one comes to it from the Dominican Republic this is less apparent than it would be otherwise. The original Arawaks wouldn't work or fight, so the Indian problem was disposed of with the same drastic simplicity that we used in the United States; they were killed or driven off. Negro slaves did not inundate this island as they did other islands, because Puerto Rico was poor even in its heyday, and few of the early settlers could afford to buy many slaves. Since American occupation began in 1898, color has edged even farther from the dark end of the spectrum.

We spent less time in San Juan than we had spent in the other capitals, not because it was less interesting but because it was comparatively com-

pact. Also, time was running out for us. We were soon ready to take off with the Willys for a look at what else the island had to offer.

This raised the problem of where to go and where to start. On the other islands there were just some roads and when we had covered them we had another island chalked off. But Puerto Rico has over fifteen hundred miles of excellent highways, a lot more than we had time for and a lot more in proportion to its size than most of the United States. They cover the island with a paved network. They begin everywhere and end nowhere. A well-paved highway, part of it a superhighway, circles the island. There are roads that lead to places, and more roads still that merely lead away from places up into the scenery. Of the latter sort, the road through the part of the Caribbean National Forest at El Yunque—the Anvil—is probably the most spectacular. Wrongly, perhaps, I chose this first. It might have been better left for a climax.

Though El Yunque is but forty miles from San Juan, we got off to a very early start, having learned by now that clouds have a predictable habit of cluttering up the scenery in the afternoon. Route Three, across the coastal plain that lies back of San Juan, is a picturesque drive in itself, and even though we were off to an early start there was a surprising number of people already on the road. Puerto Rico has taken up our Sunday holiday idea and added something to it. The road stayed down in low, rolling country through Rio Piedras and past the beautiful campus of the University of Puerto Rico, on to Mamey thirty miles from the capital. Here the road up to El Yunque starts, but we were but a few miles from Luquillo, one of the island's most popular beaches, so we drove on for a look at it. By now waving palms and sandy crescent of beaches, however lovely, were beginning to look slightly like something we had seen before someplace. But the neat rows of bath houses, the trim picnic tables, and a few scattered outdoor fireplaces and water faucets were further indications that Puerto Rico has learned how to make a holiday of any Sunday. Cars were parked solid in the shade of the palms along the road for over a mile. Adding everywhere to the holiday and picnic touch were countless roadside stands selling the Puerto Rican counterpart of the hot dog—*lechón asado*, or roast pork sandwiches.

Poorer children munched on *chicharrones* or bits of fried pigskin, as our own youngsters work over an all-day sucker.

Returning to the crossroad leading to El Yunque, we turned to follow up the course of a little stream toward the mountains ahead. It was a peaceful little country stream at first, a mere babbling brook. But it got over its lazy ways, became fast and mean-looking. It turned to boiling rapids, and then to leaping cataracts. Infected by its change in spirit, the road became much the same. It quit being a bucolic road through farmland, took to sweeping around graceful curves cut out of the mountain wall, gave this up finally to scramble goatlike right up the mountain's face in a series of zig-zags that had the Willys panting. It gave us inspiring views, views of rolling farmland, of forested mountains, of endless ocean. It gave us a look at a dim serrated edge out at the end of things where sea and sky meet, the Virgin Islands, the next stepping-stones down across the rest of the Caribbean. But if I had given the Willys its head and enjoyed the scenery, there was no limit to the number of places where we could have easily left the road.

For once, our gain in altitude wasn't compensated by a loss in temperature. We were climbing into an open-air greenhouse. We were climbing into the green light of a jungle roomier than most jungles. We were climbing into the past. Tree ferns larger than we had ever seen arched over the road, filtered lacy bits of sunlight down through the green shade. There was a heavy, earthy smell to the air—a smell such as must have been here when the earth was young and warm and not half dry yet. No one would have been less surprised than we if a dinosaur had nosed through the giant ferns and sniffed and snorted at our car. Back to the Carboniferous by automobile, that was us. Then the Willys' merry bubbling and boiling gave way to the frenzied hiss of steam, such a hiss as must have blown through cracks in the thin earth in Jurassic time. We stopped to let it cool off and get a refill from the stream, and to bring our minds up to date with thoughts of radiators and tired old automobiles and things like that, remembering that after all this was really the Cenozoic Era. The dinosaurs were all gone, long ago.

While waiting for the Willys to regain its composure, I thought to



† Picking bananas on the south coast of Jamaica

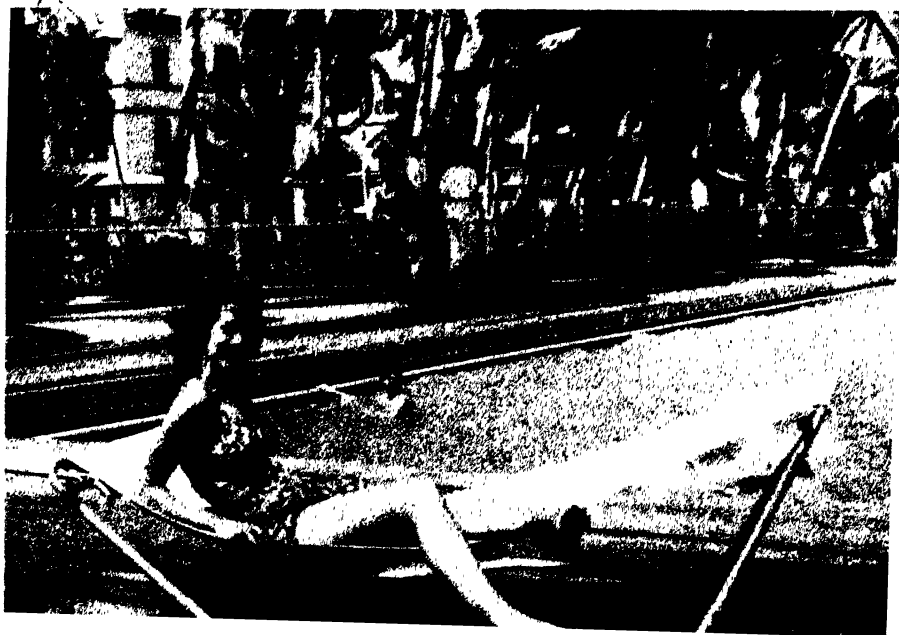


Hindu priest and temple near St. Joseph, Trinidad



The bobby lends dignity to British authority in Port of Spain

Swimming pool of the Myrtle Bank, famous tourist hotel at Kingston, Jamaica





Fisherman near Balandra Beach, Trinidad, with Hawk's Beak turtle, source of "tortoise shell"

improve the shining moment by trying to catch some of this lace-and-lettuce wonderland in deathless Kodachrome. I started clambering up a steep bank. Serious photographers always climb up a steep bank to get a better point of vantage, to improve their pictures, and to develop their wind. Suddenly Gladys let out a ladylike screech behind me. I was unnerved. It was a wordless, frightened, primitive sound, such as the graceful Eohippus might have made, away back in Eocene time. Had she seen a dinosaur after all? I scrambled back down.

Gladys was standing transfixed, gazing wide-eyed at some rustling motion in the leaves at her feet. "What's up?" I asked, but she only gasped and pointed. I looked closer. It was a centipede. Not just an ordinary centipede, but the great-great-granddaddy of all the centipedes in the world. It was a centipede out of the primeval past, out of the age when dragonflies were two feet from wing tip to wing tip. I estimated it at seven inches in length, having always found that estimating in such cases is more impressive than actual measurement. Anyway, who wanted to pick him up and hold him down on a ruler? Moreover, anyway, it had a barbed tail like a scorpion, a tail such as never belonged on a Twentieth Century centipede. Who wants to hold a centipede by the tail even if he has a rounded, streamlined, modern tail? I picked up a dead stick and raised it to bring down on his head—like *Homo neanderthalensis* in defense of his mate.

Then the Cenozoic Era caught up with me again. Suppose I don't kill him until he has a fair trial? Maybe he can act in the movies! So I dug out the movie camera, and tossed the centipede out into a patch of sunlight which incidentally had a few scrubby little ferns just getting started in it. I showed Gladys how to keep him awake and moving without danger to life or limb, and I went to work with the close-up lens.

So when you go to El Yunque maybe you will find a dinosaur. Who cares? There are never more than four legs on a dinosaur. But you should see my primordial centipede crashing over the tops of the ferns. You should see the legs on him! Scurrying for shade from his patch of sunlight, filling a movie screen from edge to edge, he embodies more of

what El Yunque was all about when it was young and all over the world than any dinosaur—unless you find a big one.

With appetites whetted by the El Yunque trip, we went into conference with the tourist bureau for advice and information on how to make the rest of Puerto Rico look as memorable even though made of the same old things. They teamed us up with a guide named Hector, who had been places and knew people. We settled with Hector for what is known as the Loop Trip across the island to Ponce on the south coast. The Loop Trip sounds like something that is nicely laid out and formal with no nerve-wracking indecision on which way to turn, but such is not the case. Puerto Rico has far too many roads to permit of anyone getting into a rut. The Loop Trip simply means that you cut across the island by any leisurely and indirect route of the many available, keeping in mind only that you are heading for Ponce but nobody is keeping supper warm for you. Then you turn away from Ponce in some direction or other, and you ramble around to some other places—dealer's choice—and when you have had enough of it or your time is up, you roll back to San Juan, remembering en route that nobody is waiting supper for you in San Juan either.

We took off on Route One from San Juan to Rio Piedras—old stuff so far, but after that it got different. This Route One across the island to Ponce for the most part follows the old Camino Real—royal highway—which was a wagon road in more leisurely times. What did those old timers care if a road wound around a little? We didn't care either.

There is something about Puerto Ricans that is different, and it showed up on this trip. This is digression and philosophical reflection and other things you don't want much of in travel, but on the other hand you don't want to sit in the back of the Willys all the way across the island, listening to the radiator boil. So this is about Puerto Ricans:

There they are, three million of them crowded on one little island. Any statistician can divide the population into the income and show that Puerto Rico is starving poor. Anyone can lift the lid in a corner of a San Juan slum and prove that's right. And they're in the tropics. By any rule, Puerto Rico should be one vast shanty town.

We have spoken of the trip to El Yunque as a drive through a greenhouse. The trip across the island and many of the other trips on the island were drives through a semi-formal flower garden, with the highways only wide walks through beds bordered with violent and exotic color. The *flamboyant* or royal poinciana is an eye-catcher in bloom when it grows up by accident, but when generations of thought and effort produce miles of *flamboyant* neatly lining the roads and nearly knocking your eyes out with the blaze of color—the effect is easy to remember. But, not satisfied with this, a second border of lower but equally brilliant hibiscus fills in the gaps. Sometimes they run out of *flamboyant* and have to struggle along with just solid hedgerows of hibiscus.

Halfway across the island we looped off to a spot called Treasure Island, having heard that this is the proper spot for celebrities and honeymooners. Treasure Island seems at first to be only a better-class mountain resort, but it is more than that. Actually it is a large-scale farm enterprise, American big business in agriculture with Latin overtones. It is possible to visit Treasure Island and never notice more than the fine sports facilities, the excellent accommodations, the good food. All of this is, indeed, for the most part only a profitable sideline. Agriculture under modern methods flourishes here as nowhere else, ranging from mulberry culture for silkworms to extensive fields of excellent strawberries. Name a crop—they have some of it at this place.

Up the valley of the La Plata River were what appeared to be patches of snow on the slopes. This is where fine tobacco is grown under muslin, expensive tobacco for cigar wrappers. This was prosperous farming country, though with many of its people kept poor by overcrowding. Because of the greater amount of highway travel, sometimes you get a deeper feeling of contrast here. We all know that there are oxcarts and automobiles in every country to the south. But in Puerto Rico they get closer oftener. We know that American products go all over the world, and that people are crazy about them. But the best human scene across the mountains was a woman trotting down the road from the corner store with groceries piled in her arms. A bunch of *plantains*, the cooking

bananas. A few long *yuca* roots, to take the place of potatoes. A box of cornflakes. A can of Crisco.

Then we came down out of the mountains into the broad coastal border of waving fields of cane again, and a city loomed up ahead in a low sort of way. A Lions' Club sign and a Rotary wheel announced that it was Ponce.

Even with its service club signs, Ponce was different. In fact, there is some reason to believe that the service club signs may be posted outside the city limits. Ponce de León built San Juan, but time has changed it. Ponce is like a city when he was still here. You could find Spain of the ages in San Juan, you could become enthralled with the air of bygone days—but you were forever coming out of a narrow little street that hadn't even been swept since the sixteenth century and coming face to face with an ice-cream parlor. Ponce was as Spanish as Spain, as old as Time, quiet, dignified, acting its age. It is an important port for sugar and coffee, but the townsfolk don't let business ruin their rest. There is a Rotary Club part of town in the central city, a place of modern department stores, drug stores, notions stores. But it is small and compact and people don't talk about such things.

Even in the matter of house painting, there was something different about this place. We have spoken poetically of the native tendency through most of these islands to paint houses in rainbow hues. Actually, the colors are often garish things that no self-respecting rainbow would dare to show. There was a softer tone to Ponce's color, a tone that made one think perhaps Ponce de León had slapped the paint on some of them himself, to let time and the sunlight soften them. The place never hurts the eyes.

From Ponce we rolled west and then up into the hills again, through coffee country. The tree-lined highway here was less floral, more exotic. Rich green stalks of banana plants shared the roadside with *almarcio* trees, a member of the rubber tree family with striking red bark. The scene was draped with long grey streamers of moss, throwing the picture into soft focus like a scene from a daydream.

For the most part, the coffee country isn't rich. Sugar is the big money

crop of the island, a crop singularly ill-adapted to small individual enterprise. Sugar brings Puerto Rico dollars with zeros draped after them. Coffee here is more often pin money for little people—remembering that pin money is all the money many a family gets in this land. It is raised more often in small individual holdings by people forced to live most of the year from their garden patch. It is a seasonal crop, making its owner rich one day a year. In other places coffee production is sometimes highly organized and mechanized, but here for the most part methods are simple and primitive. Much of the countryside is laden with the heavy smell of roasting coffee, for people use it as well as sell it. It is always roasted for home use to a nearly charred state, making the roasting process highly aromatic. It is served with a lot of sugar making it thick, black, and sweet, doing double duty as both drink and dessert.

Because of the time we spent looking over a coffee plantation, we had to put up for the night in Yauco, which gave us a taste of life in a small town. Yauco doesn't know about tourists. We were surprised to find a choice of two or three small but clean hotels of limited facilities. We settled on the Hotel New York.

The next day brought another long drive through the flower garden, with a touch of variety thrown in. We touched the sea at the port of Guanica, where American troops first landed in the Spanish-American War. We passed, but did not pause at, one of the world's largest *centrales* or sugar refineries. Then we got a slight shock. We hit a spot of dry land, land with occasional cactus. We had nearly forgotten that these islands have dry spots, for Puerto Rico is more uniformly blessed with rainfall than any of the other islands. The day ended at San German on the Guanajibo River, and after seeing Ponce it was a surprising place to end a day.

By the book, San German should be loaded with history. Two of its fine old churches date from 1511 and one of these, *Porta Coelis*, or Gate of Heaven, is so photogenic that it is perhaps one of the most photographed spots on the island. Many of the families are as old as Ponce's First Families, and some trace a fanciful descent from a rich retired

pirate who is said to have spent his declining years here. But San German is not a declining place now. A fine modern Polytechnic Institute is located here, and the town bustles with embroidery and handkerchief factories. We visited one of these to see long lines of girls at work at long tables. But actually most of these factories are really shipping centers and the greater part of the work is done under the sweat shop system, with people doing most of the work at home. We saw a bit of this and of the economic need for it at nearby Cabo Rojo, a miserable fishing village of ramshackle huts set up on stilts along the water's edge. Through open doors and on the porches were women busily engaged in the same sort of handiwork.

Mayaguez, only an hour away up the west coast, was more of the same. This is really the big center of the embroidery and handkerchief industry. We visited briefly the Dweck Factory, from which issue a million dozen handkerchiefs a year, as well as a lot of sidelines like embroidered baby clothes and women's underwear. Much of the raw material comes from the United States already made up, to have the embroidery work added here, so what this factory system really amounts to is a means of shipping hand labor into the United States. Mayaguez too is well equipped with modern schools, modern buildings, modern ideas. It has forgotten all about the past, is straining to overtake the present.

The rest of the Loop Trip was just a trip headed for the barn, with here and there a side jaunt—Aguada, where a stone monument among the palms on the beach states that Columbus landed here on November 19, 1493; near-by Aguadilla, which claims the same. After a tour of the Caribbean, one reflects on what a fine time the shades of Columbus and George Washington may have in the next world. Washington telling about his bed sores. Columbus talking about his tired, aching feet.

Borinquen Field was worth a stop, and got it. This U. S. base is a mammoth establishment, and we got the feeling after touring it that Puerto Rico was but an appendage to it. It is important not only in Caribbean air travel, but is a way-station on the transatlantic hop. We had flown over it on our way to San Juan, and had been properly

amazed by its size, its miles of great landing strips, its countless buildings. It is built to be virtually a self-sufficient unit, with everything it needs from vegetable patches to its own cemetery. Puerto Rico might secede from Borinquen Field, and nobody on the field would know the difference.

Ninety miles of superhighway connects the Field with San Juan, and it can be covered in less than two hours, with no side trips. We took side trips. It doesn't matter which, for you will want to pick your own trips.

There is a trip through the Camuy Valley near Arecibo that has something different to offer. Vertical cliffs rise on either side of the valley, and these cliffs are full of caves. Now anyone is interested in caves, but many people don't like going into them because of the feeling of confinement. The caves here have the cure for that claustrophobia sensation. Their entrances are heavily festooned with matted vines, so they give you that genuine cave feeling. But many of them run clear through the cliff, so that you can always see daylight ahead and behind. Or skip all this if you want, and g'wan back to San Juan.

The Loop Trip just about wrapped up Puerto Rico. We hadn't seen everything by a long shot, but we had seen samples of everything. With one exception—we hadn't seen The Man. Just as we had arrived in San Juan, there was a lot of celebrating going on, for the President had just given Puerto Rico back to the Puerto Ricans. He had just appointed Jesus Pinero, a native of the island, as governor. This had never happened before, and we wanted if possible to meet the first man to be allowed to carry the ball for his home team.

He was surprisingly easy to meet, and easy to talk to. Having been resident commissioner in Washington for the island for years, his English was quite a bit better than mine. He was something of a camera enthusiast himself, and the interview kept drifting from affairs of state to affairs photographic, a natural tendency, as Kodachrome makes it possible to get more color into photography than into affairs of state.

Governor Pinero was realistic in his approach to the island's problems,

once we tore ourselves away from photography. In his inaugural speech he had told his countrymen that they were essentially a poor and overcrowded people, and must have a government interested in their collective problems, rather than the problems of a select few. The dense population called for improvements in agricultural methods and for a greater degree of industrialization. He gave considerable credit to his predecessor, Rexford G. Tugwell, for having made progress toward this goal. He spoke of the work of the Industrial Development Company, engaged in a program of speeding up industry on the island both by private enterprise and through government help.

"What of recurrent talk of independence for the island?" I asked.

Governor Pinero shrugged. "Independence from what? We realize that today it would be economic catastrophe to live outside the tariff walls of the United States." We went on and talked briefly of the meaning of independence. For all its poverty and overcrowding, Puerto Rico occupies an enviable place in comparison with most of the Caribbean. Independence and economic chaos can't be readily reconciled. Governor Pinero looked forward more wisely and hopefully to a day when Puerto Rico might become another state.

We left his office in mid-afternoon, and there were a few hours of good sunlight left. A Puerto Rican had been pestering us to sell him our car, and since the islands on ahead were far too small to justify its shipment, it looked like a good idea. It looked like a better idea to him, as he didn't know the car as well. Anyway it was his own idea and he was welcome to it.

"But let's first," Gladys suggested, "see if we can get permission to drive it up on the ramps of El Morro and get a farewell picture of it, kind of sniffing to the east as if it wanted to go on and jump across the Atlantic."

So we did. Right up the ramp and onto the stone roof, with the city lying below, the American flag fluttering in the breeze, everything but a band to play the Star Spangled Banner. It was a fine finale; a great idea—one of Gladys', too. There the faithful, fitful old wagon stood, crouched on the very edge of the eastern tip of our Gibraltar, eagerly

sniffing—well, it wasn't really sniffing, no. But after the run up the ramparts its radiator was burbling softly, as if it ought to blow its nose.

Then we drove back down again, and drove off to sell the car to the man. After all, it was his own idea. He asked for it.

He got it.

CHAPTER XII

Trinidad Finale

Somewhere along the line Gladys, in a poetic mood, compared the West Indies to a long strand of brown pearls stretched across the New World's throat. It was a nice poetic concept, but betrayed a relatively limited knowledge of strands of pearls. For one thing, airplane and ship routes are rather tenuous threads on which to string pearls. And they are not brown pearls; they range ethnologically from black to white and from that to nothing, for many of them are uninhabited. Hispaniola is a queer-looking pearl, with black Haiti on one end and the white Dominican Republic on the other.

Nor are they much in the way of a matched strand. Sizes run from Cuba, which is seven hundred and sixty miles long, down to bare little dots too small to support a palm. With Puerto Rico, we run out of sizeable pearls for a great many miles, but as we look down the strand to where we should find smaller and smaller pearls, we find Trinidad away down at the end of the line. Trinidad isn't so big; it looks big after miles and millions of Leeward Islands, Virgin Islands, and just islands.

St. Thomas in the Virgin Island group was our first stop beyond Puerto Rico, and it is easy to see why we didn't bother with a car. There was almost a shuttle plane service of only minutes from San Juan, and we would have grown a bit restless waiting for the Willys to arrive by boat. Nor would we have had much use for the old crate if it got there, for the island is about thirteen miles long and from about one to less than four miles wide. It was only a taxi ride to see all the island had to offer in the way of roads.

We covered half of the island just in getting from the airport to the

city, Charlotte Amalie. That's a joke, having the airport halfway across the country from the town, but it wasn't much of a joke to the men who had to find a piece of level land big enough for a plane. At that, they had to make a fill to extend the runway out into the water in order to land the bigger planes.

Once in town, there was a surprising choice of places to stay. We had already made arrangements at Hotel 1829, but Bluebeard's Castle and the old Grand Hotel down near the waterfront are also good.

Of them all, I believe Hotel 1829 is the most impressive and distinctive. It is entered by a tremendous flight of stone steps, and from its broad porch and balcony the whole port city of Charlotte Amalie lies out before the guest like a great map. We occupied the rooms where King Carol of Rumania and Magda Lupescu stayed as refugees during part of the war.

The dining room with its great Danish fireplace flanked by Dutch ovens was a unique sight for the Caribbean. Denmark owned this island group until we bought it in 1917, and a long Danish occupancy has made the inhabited islands interestingly different. This difference is by no means limited to the Hotel 1829. There was a wealth of plain, solid stone architecture in the town that was somewhat at variance with anything else in the West Indies. Not the least distinctive feature was the abundance of tremendous wooden shutters, as big as doors, fastened from within by great iron hooks. Closed, they made a place virtually impregnable, as they were of very heavy wood. Open, the shutters themselves as well as the huge iron hinges added much that was unusual to the decorative effect.

Mr. Maguire, son of the owner of the hotel, spent a few hours in driving us completely around the island. An undecided highway keeps climbing small mountains and then wandering back to the sea, offering chiefly marine views, as much of the island is uninhabited and dry. In fact, there is not even sufficient water on it for drinking purposes, and most of the water comes from great concrete catchment basins built on the hillsides. One of the hills is occupied by Blackbeard's Tower, so named because the pirate Blackbeard once captured it and had the town

at his mercy. Another hilltop gave us a fine view of Magen's Bay with its fine bathing beach. Beyond it we could see Drake's Passage, through which Sir Francis Drake is said to have entered one time. A seat erected here for restful contemplation of the view is known—somewhat euphemiously, I am afraid—as Drake's Seat.

The island has more to offer in the way of quaint and distinctive charm than any other spot of its size in the Caribbean. It is increasingly popular, not so much with regular tourists as with folks who want to get away from it all, to rest, to fish, and to let the world hurry by to wherever it is going. It is a quiet corner away from the world. As one writer put it, "Nothing more exciting than a game of bridge ever happens here at night."

Beyond the Virgin Islands stretch a string of small islands called the Lesser Antilles. These are of mixed nationality, French Guadeloupe, British Dominica, French Martinique, British St. Lucia and Barbados. They are as interesting historically as anything in the Caribbean, but too numerous for one man to cover them all on just a trip. Many of them were Columbus' stamping grounds in 1493, in 1498, in 1502. A minor island off St. Kitts was the birthplace of Alexander Hamilton. Near Guadeloupe Admiral Romney defeated the French fleet in the struggle for empire. To St. Vincent, Captain Bligh of *Bounty* mutiny fame brought the first breadfruit seedlings. Martinique was the home of the Empress Josephine. It was Mt. Pelee on the northern end of the island that blew up in 1902 and killed forty thousand people, the greatest single catastrophe in the entire New World. Today all these islands are in deep sleep, having forgotten the days when they were once pawns of empire. We let them sleep, for the most part. An airplane can't stop quickly enough to visit them all.

At the end of the Lesser Antilles, though not considered a part of them, is the island of Trinidad. Fifty miles long by forty miles wide, no larger than many an American county, yet it contains perhaps nearly as much land as all the Lesser Antilles put together. Lying but a short distance off the coast of South America, the South American clasp of our strand of pearls, it deserved a looking over. Loaded with more variety

than any island in the whole Caribbean, it demanded attention. So we gave it some, landing by night in Port of Spain. It was perhaps fitting that we should come in night black as pitch to the island that has supplied the world's asphalt for over half a century.

It is too bad that Trinidad isn't close to home instead of close to South America. It would offer a convenient trip around the world at little inconvenience and expense. Though the bulk of its population is colored, it is a British possession. Its colored population speak an English mixed with words brought over from Africa or picked up from native Carib, from French, from Spanish, for this rich little island has been a football of empire, and thousands of French fled here during the revolution in Haiti over a century ago. Its English overlords are not the English of today but the English of Kipling. Blending nicely with Kipling are the thousands of Hindus transplanted here from India as a source of cheap labor. Out in the hills are African kraals. On the asphalt lake is the last word in modern industrialization, in the refining processes for the crude asphalt. What more could one ask of an island the size of a county?

Not the least interesting spot on the island is the capital city of Port of Spain, and the Queens Park Hotel where we put up was not at all a bad place from which to see some of the city's attractions. It is a rambling old Victorian place facing on the Savannah and flanked by the homes of some of Port of Spain's élite. Its tremendous open-air dining room is the Mecca of Port of Spain society. Not far off is the section of the East Indian shops.

The Savannah, heart of the city's life, is a grassy meadow of a hundred and seventy acres, surrounded by large trees. As it is a race track as well as a soccer and cricket field, there is usually something going on there. The hotel commands a fine view of all the Savannah's activities, but the more myopic spectators may watch while they loaf in the shade of the gigantic Saman trees that surround it. These trees are quite a sight in themselves, as they are of tremendous size and their limbs reach out so far horizontally that they seem to defy the law of gravity. It is a tree of dense foliage, and the shade of a Saman tree is all shade. Or if you wish

to enjoy a slight breeze while watching the sports, take a slow-motion ride in one of the open-air trolleys that circle part of the Savannah. And if the action palls, sit on the other side of the trolley and get either a pain or a laugh from the fantastically ornate homes of the well-to-do. For the most part they are a nice blending of the architectural agonies of French, Victorian, Spanish, and Moorish ideas of how to throw money around and have it all show on the outside of a house. Here are raised to the *n*th degree the architectural features most suited to catching attention and pigeon droppings.

Our first trip along Trinidad's highway was over the Saddle to beautiful Maracas Bay on the north coast. This is an American-built road, giving the islanders access to the fine beach of the bay by way of compensation for their former beach, which is now taken over by the American base, Fort Read, to the west of Port of Spain. It is difficult, though, to see why the people should have wanted a compensation for loss of a beach, as the island is virtually ringed with excellent beaches. Anyway, it is a fine road and gave us a good look at the island, taking us through cane fields, climbing up through cocoa plantations growing in the protecting shade of *immortel* trees, giving us another touch of bamboo orchards, and throwing in a few fine views of the Gulf of Paria and Maracas Bay.

We next crossed the island directly westward, through a more level country, a densely populated country with frequent towns and villages. Here we were back again in the West Indies, with wood frame architecture dominant. At Arima, halfway across, a new race track reminded us that money had been flowing into this island as a result of the war, and that some of this money came from the pay window at nearby Fort Read. We took a short side trip to visit this base, and were pleasantly surprised to find that even a little sample of the United States is to be found on this polyglot island. After Borinquen Field this establishment wasn't very big, but it was nice to be home away from home again.

Beyond Fort Read we ran out of towns and into tropical rain forest again. There was some lumbering and charcoal making along the way,

and we even came upon a rubber plantation. It wasn't a big industry here, but it gave further evidence that Trinidad has everything and can do everything. This trip, ending up among the coconut groves about Matura on the east coast, brought home to us the unbelievable variety offered by this one little island.

All along the way on any trip, we were more than struck by Trinidad's varied fauna and flora, far in excess of all the rest of the Caribbean lumped together. Howler monkeys made the jungle sections hideous with noise, with considerable help from the bluejay-like *keskadee* birds. The brilliant *toucan* flitted by, his tremendous yellow bill a sight that must be seen to be believed. Sixteen varieties of humming birds, yellow and black orioles, the stately scarlet ibis, the queer *trogon* bird which rears its young in ants' nests, all fill more of nature's niches with bird life than anyplace we've ever seen.

Nor do birds have a monopoly. There are plenty of *agoutis*, which are best described as a sort of short-eared rabbit that enjoys getting its feet wet. Opossums, armadillos, and a small variety of deer fill in more places left blank in the other islands.

Nor is the reptilian family without representation. We were warned that this is the only island where dangerous snakes are to be found. The dreaded *fer-de-lance*, extinct in the other islands, is still here. The beautiful and deadly coral snake, the dreaded bushmaster, are residents of Trinidad. The impressive but harmless boa constrictor is sometimes encouraged to stay around the garden to keep down rodents.

Flowers, too, have taken over Trinidad, and without the help they have received in Puerto Rico. Here and there as we drove along there was wafted to us the nearly overpowering sweetness of the Christmas Flower. Beautiful wax pink *antherium lilies* grew wild in roadside ditches. The *immortel* trees were staid enough, but we were told that when they are in bloom, from January through March, they are a riot of red that puts the *flamboyant* to shame.

But we can't stand about sniffing blossoms, can we? There was still one more trip to make, and it had to be made. This was the trip to the asphalt lake on the southwest corner of the island. Scenically, this fifty-

seven mile jaunt rated low, but after all there is only one asphalt lake in the world and this was it, and all the world's tarred roads have come out of it. From the viewpoint of human interest, this trip was tops. In less than fifty-seven miles we went halfway around the world.

Water buffalo pulled primitive plows in fields along the roadside, guided by Hindu farmers. Water buffalo pulled primitive carts, on which sat *sari*-covered Hindu women beside their menfolk. Even the homes along the way were Hindu homes, adobe walled, with rounded corners and oddly thatched. We passed huge sugar centrals, but the human evidence along the way told us we were over in India, not over here. Turbaned fishermen cast and drew their nets in Othaheite Bay, stopped to sell their catch to the Hindu mob on the beach, went back to their fishing again. Coconut palms—good old conventional coconut palms such as we had been seeing for months—waved over us. Cocoa groves and patches of jungle moved by. Still, every time we passed a human, we knew we were far away somewhere else. To prove it, here and there were Hindu temples, and an occasional Mohammedan mosque.

The tar pit brought us back a bit, even though there were some Hindus there, too. It was a black, ugly marsh, of well over a hundred acres. India is exotic; this ugly black spot must be nearer home. Trucks were rolling down beaten paths across the tar, and there was a hurry and an ugliness and an efficiency that didn't mention India. We followed a truck down and walked across the revolting stuff, shriveled like giant folds of elephant skin. It was dry enough and didn't stick to our shoes, but it gave oddly under our feet and Gladys said it was like walking on hard-packed clouds. Here and there men with mattocks were digging out chunks of the black cheese pocked with bubbles, loading it in trucks, rushing it off to the refinery. Tomorrow the spots dug out today will fill up again. This has been going on for fifty years, and has lowered the tar lake by only twenty feet. According to geologists, another two hundred and fifty feet and we'll have to find a substitute.

Off to our right a group of workmen were singing and we strained to catch the words. The leader intoned in a rich African tenor,



The Hindu jewelry maker of Port of Spain works with feet as well as hands



The breadfruit of the West Indies, nature's mamma to the poor

Get to work, get to work!
I've told you what to do.
If you don't try, you'll lose your job.
Then you will be through.

We were hearing the *calypso* in its native haunts. Some calypso singers get good enough in improvisation of this troubador type of song to quit working. They hang around towns, win calypso contests, get jobs in New York night clubs, make recordings. We were hearing calypso as it is when it gets its start, all that is left in the world of the minstrelsy of the Middle Ages.

That trip left us with little more to do but to catch a plane and go home. But before we could accomplish this, one last adventure came along. I had mentioned my keen disappointment in finding voodoo to be mostly drumbeats in Haiti, in talking over the trip with a young American in business in Port of Spain. He defended the voodoo legend, said that while of course it was overplayed for tourists and stay-at-home travelers alike, nevertheless there was a lot of real voodoo religion in the islands. I laughed it off, but he insisted that he had seen such ceremonies through the co-operation of a colored friend of his.

"How about this friend of yours getting me in on it?" I asked.

"Sure, the very next time they have a get-together."

I regarded this as his "out" at the time, but on our return from the tar pit he dropped around to the hotel with the information that "tonight's the night." What could I do? It was unfair to Haiti to patronize voodoo in Trinidad. But on the other hand, Haiti had introduced me to calypso singing, which is rightfully a Trinidad product. Naturally I went, but—for once—without Gladys and without cameras. No, he assured me, everything was perfectly safe. But we would be witnessing the show by night, from a place of concealment arranged through his dark friend. The pop of a flash-bulb might stampede the self-hypnotized devotees into doing something rash. And the place of concealment wasn't large enough to include Gladys.

So after dinner we piled into his diminutive English car and wound off across part of Trinidad. Finally we threaded our way through the

crooked streets of a little village, following the low-pitched drumbeats. We turned up a pitch dark alley, parked the car, knocked on a back-yard gate, and this fellow's friend let us in.

It was a large yard, and at one end of it was an open shed—nothing more than a thatched roof set up on four posts. The yard was just beginning to fill up with devotees who gathered close-packed about this shed. My friend's black friend led us around the edge of the yard to a point of vantage behind a few conveniently piled packing boxes. "You stay here, with safety," the colored boy said. "Don't be scare. Ev'ry body friend. Nobody bother. But you take careful, eh? Please not to let anyone see." Then he left us, thus comforted and reassured, and went to join the crowd.

Crude benches arranged about the outside of the open shed were jammed with blacks. Over their shoulders a packed mass of more colored folk peered at the ceremony.

The spectacle within the shed was rather dull at first. We couldn't see why anyone should strain to see it. Musicians, at one end of the shed, were lazing along with drums and rattles, not at all putting their hearts into their work. In front of them was a low, crude altar—only a few stones set upright, with a large knife stuck in the ground in the center. Ringed round this were some bottles, pop bottles, catsup bottles, gin bottles, for a good bottle is never tossed away. My friend whispered that they were full of rum.

In front of the altar a few men and women were dancing but the dancing consisted almost wholly of listlessly suggestive movements of the body—sort of half-hearted suggestions. From time to time a man joined hands with a woman, and they danced around together. Now and then a man got down and rolled on the floor in odd contortions, or knelt transfixed and crawled about on his knees. In either case, these seemed to be ceremonial ways of working up toward the bottles to get a drink.

It was hard to be carried away in our hot, cramped, sweaty quarters. Our chief emotion was impatience fostered by discomfort. But we noticed that the drums and the worshippers began to take on sort of a wavelike rhythm. There were minutes dull as dishwater, and then action

and tempo would pick up for a bit—recede—pick up—each time rising a little higher. The suggestive dancing became less half-hearted. The drums were drowned out on the emotional crests of wild shouts and ejaculations.

At what seemed afterward to have been the emotional peak of the ceremony, a wildly dancing woman suddenly froze in her tracks, let loose a high-pitched scream that rang and rang against the board walls of the yard, and then went into a frenzy. She tore, scratched, clawed wildly at anyone within reach. One of the men—my friend said a voodoo priest—took her hand, mumbled soothing words to drive out the bad spirit, quieted her, and she went back to normal dancing.

Shortly after this, in a quiet time, a live rooster was brought in. The black voodoo priest took the knife that stood between the stones and cut its throat while two assistants held it. One of them was quick to catch the spurting blood in a cup. The cup was passed around to the people who had done most of the dancing. They each took a ceremonial sip, passed it on, and resumed dancing.

But dancing fell off rapidly after this point. Exhaustion, the first streaks of dawn, and a sense of climax caused watchers and dancers alike to steal away. Grey daylight on the empty and overturned bottles, on a few black feathers from the sacrifice, did nothing to enhance the scene. The dust that had been kept churned up through the long night settled now, softening the rough edges. The thick rank smell of sweat lingered on—only the bright sun could burn that away.

I was exhausted, too. But not from emotion. It had been an uncomfortable night. With all its ups and downs, it hadn't been an exciting night. This was voodoo—voodoo as it is voodooed. You can have it. The old time religion is good enough for me.

There was nothing left now but to await our plane which left at night. I guided Gladys through the shopping district, holding her hand or handbag when she showed sign of weakening before the temptations of the East Indian shops or Bombay stores. Fine silks and embroidery, Benares brassware, inlaid jewel boxes, oriental perfumes—all very fine, but the house is so full of travel junk now that I can't find a place to lie

down. The English stores on Fredericks street—well, here I gave Gladys back her handbag. English woollens, Scotch plaids, Irish linen—prices on some of these goods outside the tariff wall of the United States make one ashamed to take them away from the storekeeper.

That was our lazy day. Nothing to do, really, but wait for the plane or start back afoot. Finally night fell and it was time to get out to the field. We climbed aboard our Pan American Airways liner, and in a few minutes were borne aloft. It was a black night and Trinidad is a very dark island, and a minute after we left the field we were only a little point in directionless space. The receding lights of Port of Spain winked at us and the stars twinkled around us everywhere, and it was hard to say which were stars and which was Port of Spain. Anyway, the pilot had a map and a compass and it was his worry. We leaned back and dreamed. It must have been a dream. There couldn't have been that much in so few months except on the magic carpet of dreams.

While dreaming we went on farther and slept awhile. There was water, water everywhere when we awoke, but shortly afterward our mechanized magic carpet brought a familiar scene into focus. The New York skyline, famed even in Trinidad.

Everything would have been all right except that we had to go downtown to see a man about a book. There were no sea breezes blowing through the city's canyons. The wind that whistled around New York's street corners was right off the ice, and filled with flecks of snow that bit like knives. We had left here with summer just getting under way, and with only a hazy idea of how long we would be gone, and with no idea at all that we would let the Caribbean lure so much time away from us. We had left prepared for summer in a summery world. We had come back with nothing more added to what we had taken with us than Gladys' poetic image of a warm pearl necklace stretched across the New World's throat. A muffler would have been better.

We leaned into a wind that surely must have swept both Poles and an icebox to pick up all it had. We came around a corner into a New York canyon williwaw—a wind that blew up, down, and sidewise. I turned up my coat collar to do service in lieu of a warm pearl necklace,

and fought to steal back just a few bites of that biting air, just enough to do me for breathing purposes. I didn't want any more of it than that, and I had that coming if I could get it, as the same wind had whipped my breath away when we came around that corner.

But Gladys was made of sterner stuff. She was not only breathing, but she had a little left over for conversation. It wasn't just idle chatter, either. She came through with a fine idea, only we couldn't use it just now. We both filed it away for later.

"Herb, let's go back," Gladys said.

(1)

